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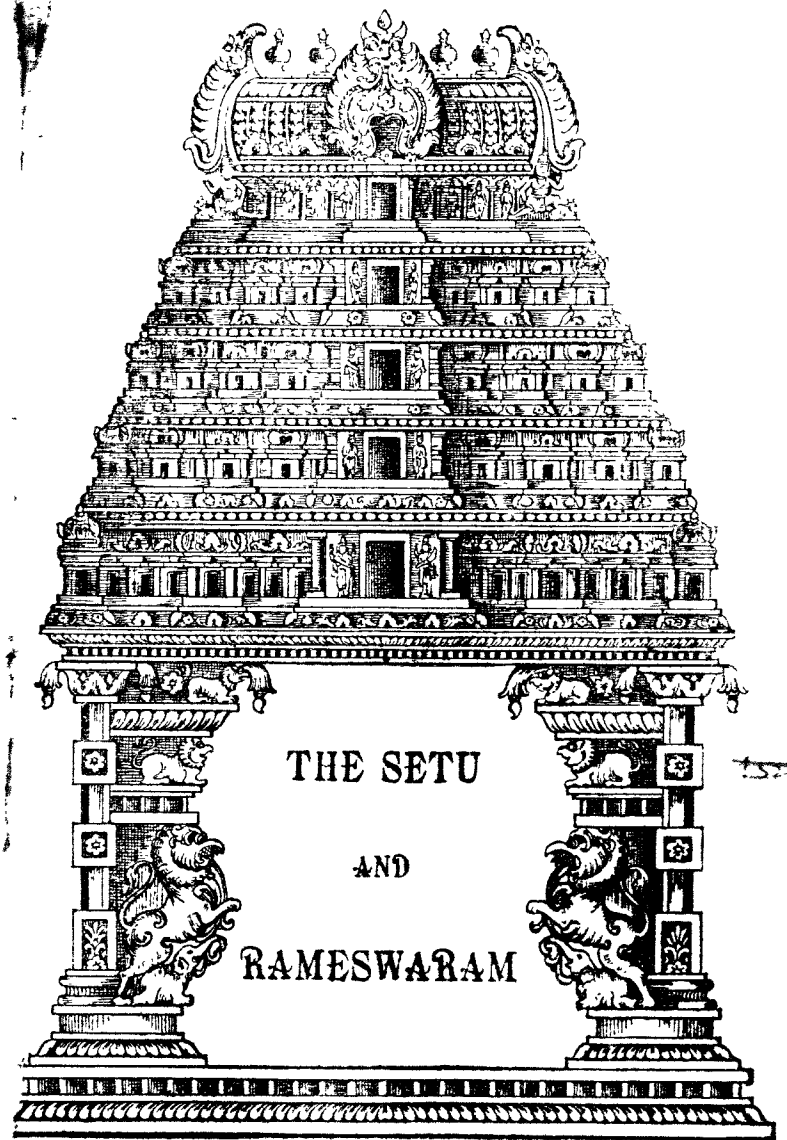

BY
N. VANAMAMALAI PILLAI,
Treasurer, RAMESWARAM.

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My dear Vaidyanatha Pillai,

I am pleased to grant you permission to publish this useful and sacred volume in token of my extreme devotion and love for Sri Ramanathaswamy, the patron Lord of the House of Sethupathis.

Shanmuga Rajeswara.

Rajah of Ramnad

Palace
6th June '24

(Parvatheeswara Nadha Dhara)

PLATE II —Letter of command, kindly given by Srimath Hiranya Garbayaji Ravikula Muthuvijaya Regunatha Rajah R. Shunmuga Rajeswara Naganatha Sethupathi Avergal, Rajah of Ramnad.

THE
SETU AND RAMESWARAM

BY

N. VANAMAMALAI PILLAI,
(Treasurer, Rameswaram Devasthanam).

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PUBLISHERS NOTE.

We have great pleasure in announcing to the public that in addition to the English Edition, a Tamil and Hindi Edition of the Setu and Rameswaram is under preparation and will shortly be published.

Copies can be had from the publishers.

V. NARAYANAN & BROTHER,
RAMESWARAM.

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PREFACE.

With *single-hearted* devotion, I began the pious task and sacred duty of writing this book, in the year of grace. 1924 By His Grace, I am able to offer the completed work to Him and His devotees in 1929. It is six years since I devoted and dedicated myself, body and soul, in one life-long consecration to the service of Sri Ramanatha. Were life piled on life, I would not ask for more, than to lay it all at His sacred feet; and hence, this immortality, called a book, I lay humbly at His feet, as an augmentation and continuation of that service, unceasing, perpetual, everlasting !

My service in this work, is *two-fold* ; to serve the Lord and to serve his devotees. I seek to serve the devotees by providing them with accurate information regarding the route to be followed, sights to be seen, baths to be taken ; I have tried to set forth in detail all that is necessary to make the pilgrimage pleasant and fruitful. To the more thoughtful reader, I have offered information of a historic and sastraic character and propounded problems for the mind inclined to philosophic speculation. My service to the Lord Himself, is by setting down details of worship, list of *vahanams* and jewels, to remind myself and my colleagues and subordinates of the duty we have to discharge, correct in every particular, as true servants and devotees of Sri Ramanatha. I humbly trust the book will prove in after times, a valuable record and a useful book of reference. I cannot serve the Lord better than by making his service easy to others and proclaiming His greatness in this little book of mine.

In the writing of this book, my obligations are *three-fold* :

(1) For the collection and collation of texts for inclusion in this work, I am thankful to the learned Pandit Ranganatha Achariar of Kothandaramaswami Temple.

(2) For helping in putting into shape and form, the notes I had patienty accumulated for a long time, I am deeply indebted to Mr. D. A. Narasimham, M.A., L.T., Lecturer in English, Government College, Kumbakonam.

(3) For various improvements, I am highly grateful to Mr. T. B. Krishnaswami Mudaliar, M.A., B.L., District Educational Officer, Ramnad.

Fourthly and finally, I owe the early and sumptuous publication of this work to the kind generosity and munificence of the present Sethupathi to whom with his gracious permission this volume is dedicated.

The Setuyatra is fruitless without a sight of the Sethupathi, and my efforts would have been in vain but for his kind patronage.

AUTHOR

TO

THE LORD SREE RAMANATHA

AND

TO HIS DEVOTED SERVANT

SRIMATH HIRANYA GARBAYAJI RAVIKULA MUTHU-VIJAYA RAGUNATHA RAJAH SHUNMUGA RAJESWARA NAGANATHA SETHUPATHI

THE PRESENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TIME-HONOURED AND TRADITIONAL GUARDIANS OF THE SETU AND OF THE TEMPLE

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

AT RAMESWARAM.

One wave, of the thousand pilgrim waves, that lave
Each hour in countless crowds, through endless time
Thy sacred feet, how dare I sing in rhyme
Thy praise, Sri Rama's Lord and mine? Ay! save
As the flowery foam flung by each meeting wave,
Or the squirrel's grains of sand, which love sublime
Paid for in streaks yet uneffaced of time!
Even as the squirrel for the waters give,

These verses weak as foam, as small as sand,
To the Great Giver of all Good, I dedicate!
O sea-washed wind-swept Ramanatha's shrine
With stately towers that soar like thoughts divine!
Embodiment of Rama's triumph stand
Untouched by time, ennobling, inviolate!

T. B. KRISHNASWAMI,
D. E. O., Ramnad.

THE SETHUPATHI MAHARAJ OF RAMNATHPUR—
The Lord of the Cause Way—The Protector of the Setu.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE RAJAH OF RAMNAD.

An adequate idea and appreciation of the antiquity and historic importance of the House of Ramnad, is possible only if we go back in point of time beyond the age of the publication of the *Ramayana* to the incidents themselves, incidents contemporaneous with the installation of the first Sethupathi. From that remote time altogether staggering to the memory, if not to the imagination also, the line has been continued to our own days, with an available authentic historic record from 1605 A.D. and with a traditionary record coming down the tide of time, embalmed and enshrined in temple rituals and ceremonials, for instance of the Rameswaram Temple, stretching beyond history to the twilight of fable.

This preservation through long lapse of immemorial time, the family doubtless owes, to the many charities for which the House of the Sethupathi is proverbial. All along the old pilgrim-route to Rameswaram, as in Rameswaram itself the charities are manifold and if His Holiness the Maha Pandarasannadhi of Thiruvaduthurai Mutt, in his daily prayer praises the Sethupathi as his *annadhatha*, the extent of these charities needs no elaborate or detailed mention.

Descended of this ancient House and illustrious line of ancestors is the Rajah of Ramnad, the Sethupathi, the hereditary guardian of the Sacred Causeway at Dhanushkodi. In this capacity the Sethupathi is known to hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who annually visit the shrine of Sri Ramanatha at Rameswaram. For indeed the pilgrimage to Rameswaram is not considered complete unless a visit is made to Ramalinga Vilas and the Sethupathi at Ramnad.

The Sethupathi is the head of the great tribe in South India known as the Maravars inhabiting a vast area extending from Cape Comorin to the borders of Tanjore. In the seventh century, owing to vicissitudes of fortune, the Sethupathis lost much of their power and large portions of their conquered kingdoms. At a later date, they gave valuable assistance to Thirumalai Naick, the Famous King of Madura.

Much of this prowess is also embodied in the titles of the Sethupathies. The archives of this ancient Samasthanam recite a hundred and eight of these, appropriate to the Sethupathi, some of which are shorthand records of historic incidents, others declare the personal prowess and piety of particular Sethupathies; yet others are a gentle reminder to him of the duties of his exalted office, and a few are conventional and complimentary. Of the last type are the comparisons with Nakula in horsemanship, with Yudhishtra in patience, with Bhima as wrestler, with Arjuna as archer, with Adisesha as orator. Of historic importance are the establisher of the thrones of Chola and Pandya Kings, protector of the Pandyas and extirpator of the Muhammadans. The performer of Hiranyagarba Yaga, the protector of the Setu, Lord of the Gandamadhana Parvatha, protector of the Aryan faith and donor of gifts of rice, refer to the Sethupathi's piety; as hunter of elephants in Ceylon and Malabar, conqueror of whatever land he sees, eagle unto the other serpent like Rajahs, one who condemns those who step on stirrups without jumping on horseback, unshaken even when mountains shake, refer to his strength and prowess. Protector of Brahmins, one who condemns the jar-carriers, protector of the *Thali*, brother unto all women other than his wives, these are a reminder of some of his duties. And all of them high sounding and magniloquent are a valuable testimony to what is expected of the Rajah. He is also praised as an adept in all arts, as a learned man himself and an expert in music.

Suffice it to say that men and women have distinguished themselves in this wonderful family. The remarkable feat of Ranee Mangaleswari Nachiar, the first donee of the Isthimirar gift from the British Government, in swimming across the flooded Cauvery and her equally remarkable feat in diplomacy in enlisting the sympathies of Mohamet Ali and Lord Clive, and securing the Zamindari to her heirs in perpetuity, read like romance.

The present Sethupathi-Rajah Shunmuga Rajeswara Naganatha Sethupathi was born on the 9th November 1909 and succeeded to the title and the Estate of his father Rajah Rajarajeswara Sethupathi on the 4th of August 1928. He had his early education at his own School the Rajah's High School, Ramnad, and joining the Presidency College, Madras, greatly distinguished himself in all branches of study, but his father's illness in May and demise not long after in August, prevented his prosecuting his studies further. His Highness is keen on improving his mind and keeps constantly reading the best literature. His attention to the

business of the State is indefatigable. He is a keen sportsman with quite a passion for Billiards and a graceful style of play in Tennis.

The Ramnad Estate at present consists of 5,000 square miles comprising more than 2,000 villages with a population of 600,000. The average income of the Estate is about 16 lacks of Rupees.

Grand scenes of festivity were witnessed in Ramnad in the months of July and August 1929. In July the Rajah Saheb was married and at the same time came off the marriages of three of his sisters. The pomp and splendour of these ceremonies, the variety of entertainments and the feeding of people on a princely scale, will make these days long remembered. They will be remembered also for the gift of Rs. 10,000 made on the marriage occasion for constructing a ward in the Ramnad Hospital. Then followed in August, the installation of th eRajah Sahib on the ancient Ghadi, after the ceremonious bath (abishekam) in the purifying waters of many sacred streams from the farthest Ganges to the nearest Vaigai and Tamraparni. The homage of the clan of Maravars with their "*Thristi Veshti*", a piece of silk cloth flung at the feet of the Sethupathi, that a vision of him may not be too bright or dazzling was very impressive.

Perhaps it is best to close this little account with the closing lines of a poem written about the Rajah Saheb,

"O Warden of the sacred coast!
O chosen of Sri Rama's host!
O bounteous Prince, our pride and boast
Long may you live in pomp and glory
Theme of lofty long and story
Till Time, never-old, itself grows hoary."

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Publisher's Note	iv
Perface	v to vi
Dedication	vii
At Rameswaram	viii
An account of the Raja of Ramnad	ix to xi
Table of Contents	xii
List of illustrations	xiii—xiv
Foreword by the Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur Sir C. V. Kumarasawami Sastrigal, Kt., B. A., B. L., Judge, High Court of Madras.	xv

SETU AND RAMESWARAM.

CHAPTER	I.	Introductory ...	1—2
,,	II.	The Setu-bandha	3—19
,,	III.	The Setu-yatra	20—31
,,	IV.	Rameswaram—The Island	32—42
,,	V.	Rameswaram—The Town	43—53
,,	VI.	The Temple—Topography	54—63
,,	VII.	The Temple—Design, Architecture and Sculpture	64—76
,,	VIII.	The Temple—Management and Worship ...	77—91
,,	IX.	The Theerthams	92—107
,,	X.	The Sethupathies.	108—128

APPENDICES.

A. Notice issued by the Devasthanam for the guidance of the Pilgrims. ... 129—134

B. The list showing the Thirthams in the temple with their respective positions ... 135—136

C. The list of chatrams and choultries from Pamban to Dhanushkodi (in the island) ... 137—139

D. Brief notes regarding some other interesting places in the Ramnad District ... 140—152

E. Authoritative passages from various sacred works in Sanskrit with brief notes on them, regarding the antiquity and importance of the Setu and of Rameswaram ... 153—179

F. (1) The list showing the grand annual festivals ... 180—181
(2) Programme of Masi-Maha Sivarathri festival ... 182
(3) Programme of Ani-Prathistanga festival ... 183
(4) Programme of Adi-Marriage festival ... 184
(5) The list showing the vahanams used during the festivals in the temple with their values ... 185
(6) The list of some of the jewels in the Temple with their values ... 186—187

G. The list showing the names of places of importance to be visited by an All-India pilgrim ... 189—196

H. The list of the names of some of the important Pandas Kshetra Prohits 196

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PLATE.		TO FACE PAGE
I.	Frontispiece—Tower.	
II.	The Facsimile—Letter graciously given by the Sethupathi ...	vii
III.	The Sethupathi—The Rajah Sahib of Ramnad ...	ix
IV.	Showing the position of Rameswaram on the Indian Peninsula ...	xvi
V.	Showing the view of the Eastern gopuram ...	2
VI.	Showing the full view of the *viaduct* from Tonithurai to the other side of the Pamban Island ...	6
VII.	Showing the full length of the Boat-Mail rake on the Pier a Dhanushkodi and the arrival of S. S. "Elgin" from Talaimannar ...	17
VIII.	Showing the Holy Bath at the Sacrad Sethu where the two oceans unite ...	29
IX.	Showing the famous sacred Mantap over the Gandamadhana Hill ...	36
X.	Showing the closing up of the Scherzer Bridge and the viaduct ...	40
X. a.	The street of the Elephants ...	46
XI.	Showing the inner view of the Rameswaram Temple Corridor—The famous in India ...	73
XII.	Showing the main Eastern inner Entrance of the Rameswaram Temple and a portion of the *aisle* ...	75
XIII.	Showing the famous Silver Car with its embroidered decorations and beautiful electrical illuminations ...	80
XIV.	Showing Sacred Bath at Navapashanam where the nine stones representing the nine planets are planted in the sea ...	93
XV.	The front view of the Sacred Temple of 'Dharbasayanam' with the Holy Tank Chakrathirtha ...	96

TO FACE PAGE

XVI. Showing the view of the Mangala Thirtha and the Aswatha Tree (ficus religiosa) and the Mantap on the north-side of the Road ... 98

XVII. Showing the inner view of the Ramalingavil as where the "Sacred Stone" is revere ntially kept and where the Sethupathis are wont to hold their Dharbars ... 118

XVIII. Showing the view of the 'Scherzer bridge' when it is lifted up and the view of the viaduct from Pamban to Toniturai ... 120

XIX. Rajah B. Raja Rajeswara Sethupathi, Late Rajah Sahib of Ramnad ... 124

XX. Rajah R. Shunmuga Rajeswara Naganatha Sethupathi, The Rajah of Ramnad ... 127

XXI. Shows the exhibition of the valuable Jewellery of the Temple during the visit of His Excellency Lord Goshen in 1927. The late lamented Rajah Rajaraje-swara Sethupathi is seen along with the Governor. 134

XXII. Showing the localities of the various Theerthams in the Temple ... 136

XXIII. Showing Sree Kothanda Ramaswamy Koil between Rameswaram and Dhanshkodi in one of its festival days ... 139

XXIV. Shows the front view of the Ramnad Maharajah's Palace ... 141

XXV. Shows the Sacred Stone on which the Sethupathis are annointed ; and pious pilgrims worship the *stone* in sacred memony of Sree Rama ... 146

XXVI. Showing the Ganesh Temple in Uppoor where the preliminary worship of a pious pilgrim should begin ... 151

XXVII. Sketch map showing the pilgrim route in India to and from Danushkodi ... 189

FOREWORD.

By the Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur Sir C. V. Kumaraswamy
Sastrigal, Kt., B.A., B.L., Judge,
High Court of Madras.

I have perused with considerable interest *The Setu and Rameswaram* by Mr. N. Vanamamalai Pillai, Treasurer of the Rameswaram Devasthanam. The book is full of very interesting information about the temple of Rameswaram and the holy Setu and its hereditary guardians—the Sethupatis of Ramnad.

To the devout Hindus there are no holier places than Rameswaram and Setu blessed by the sacred associations with Sri Rama. The never ending streams of pilgrims from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin testify to the long force of Hindu piety. To the ancient and royal family of the Sethupatis of Ramnad has from time immemorial been given the proud privilege of being wardens of the Setu and protectors of the pilgrims that visit the Sacred places cluster round the Setu and Rameswaram.

A book like the present dealing with the well known places of pilgrimage and the history of the Sethupatis cannot but be useful and interesting. It gives a brief but adequate account of the various places of pilgrimage, with useful information about all that a pilgrim needs to make the visit a success, and an account of the various Sethupatis who have made their mark in history. The piety of the author has made his labours a work of love and deserves the warm thanks of the public while the help afforded by the present enlightened Raja has made the publication of so useful a work possible.

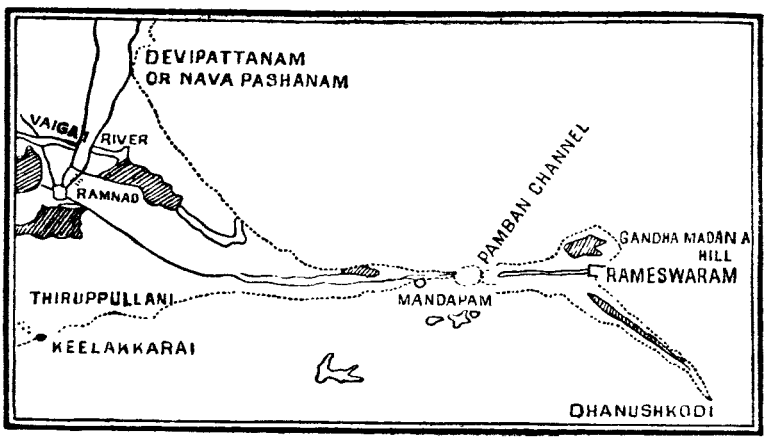
In an age when the bitterness and strife about small things are obscuring the larger issues of life a book like the present will afford restful reading.

The High Court of Judicature, Madras,
16th December 1929.

C V Kumaraswamy Sastri

High Court Judge.

PLATE IV.



PLAN SHOWING THE POSITION OF RAMESWARAM ON THE INDIAN PENINSULA

THE
SETU AND RAMESWARAM

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all.
The Earth is full of thy riches
So is this great and wide sea.—

"PSALM civ".

The educative value of travel apart, pilgrimage, it is said, will bear fruit, "like the pomegranate which is full of seeds". The heart is attuned and attentive to every object or circumstance that redounds to the glory of God and man, and pilgrimage to holy and beautiful places has accordingly been ordained by the old masters of all religions. Successive waves of rationalism have battered down faith in old institutions; but they have left untouched and if at all, only added more zest to the desire in man to come into closer touch with God by the actual sight and enjoyment of His best works. The aesthetic impulse is not a thing apart from the religious impulse, and the tourist often becomes the rhapsodist of man, nature and God.

Pilgrimage to distant shrines in picturesque and inspiring localities, involves much sacrifice of personal comfort and means, but the hopes of getting rid of the ills of this life and its imperfections through the agency of the holy places, urges men to undergo the travail. For the future, they sacrifice the present. Man liveth not by bread alone and the soul seeks its own ethereal

substance through all the mortifications of the flesh and the discomforts of the present.

Again, pilgrimage serves to educate the sense in man for beauty, by elevating his soul and bringing it into closer and more intimate touch with the laws of nature and the Universe. It frees the soul from its cramping environments, the petty anxieties and limitations of life.

India has many picturesque and inspiring spots of nature, most of which add to the sanctity of river, sea, lake, or hill and dale, the glory of temples which are the work of generations of pious and skilled human hands. South India, with its Tirupathi, Warkalai, Papanasam, Tiruchendur and Cape Comorin, can hold its own against North India in point of grandeur of natural scenery, in its holy places and surpasses her in point of architectural and sculptural work. The Shrines of Madura, of Rameswaram, of Trivandrum, of Mahabalipuram and of Jambukeswaram are the glory of architectural and sculptural design and execution. The fineness of the carving and sculpture is all the more creditable for its being wrought out of intractable material, *viz.*, hard granite. The prospect of visiting many rich and populous places on the way adds yet another feature of interest to a pilgrimage.

The inspiring scene of the meeting of the two oceans, the grand temple at Rameswaram, one of the noblest specimens of Dravidian architecture and the many holy and important places that the pilgrim has the chance of seeing and enjoying on the way, like Chidambaram, Kumbakonum, Tanjore, Srirangam, and Madura, may be said to combine for the Setu-yatra all the above-mentioned advantages.

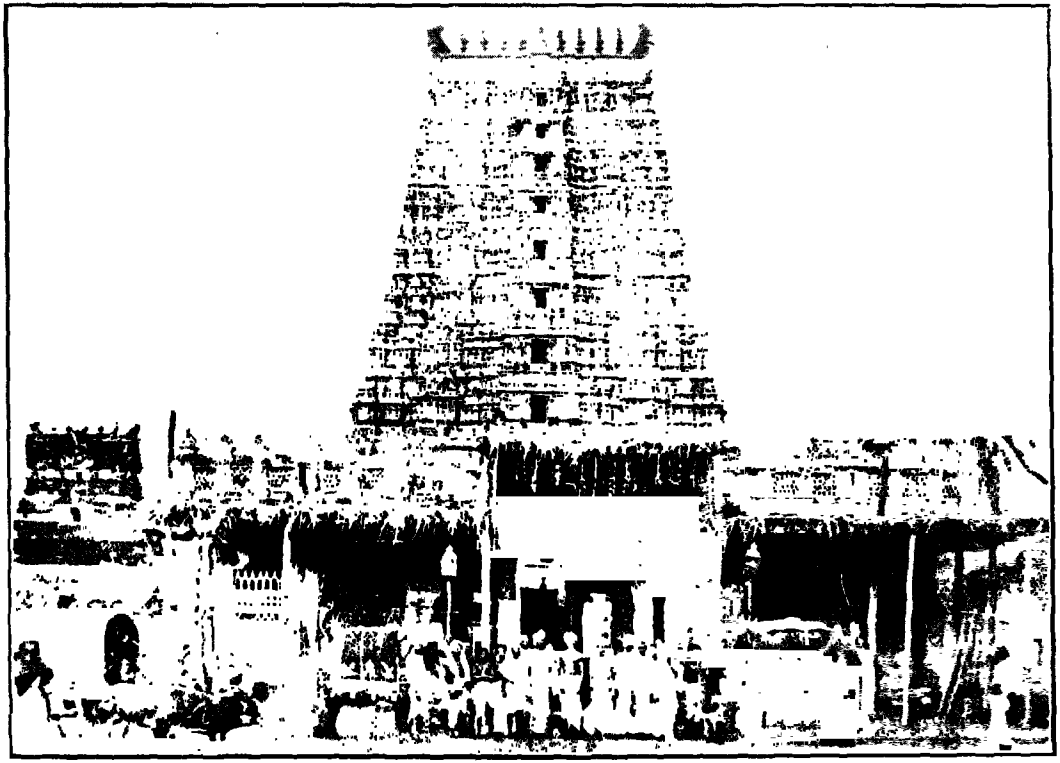


PLATE V.— Showing the view of the Eastern Gopuram or Tower.

CHAPTER II.

THE SETUBANDHA AND ITS MANIFOLD IMPORTANCE.

Here see the holy spot in the Ocean's side.
The Setubandha called, and worshipped wide.—

"VALMEEKI."

I

"The stairs to Heaven are everywhere" but are palpably manifest to the limited human soul only in places which strike the imagination and open the heart to the beauties of creation. The aesthetic Hindu-Aryan mind, with misty aeons of pantheistic tradition in its background, is unique in the supreme reverence which it pays to the liquid element which purifieth and nourisheth [1] "like protecting mothers," which [2] "feeds the Gods in Heaven" and [3] assumes manifold forms in the firmament and which in the Vedic cosmogony is credited with being the mysterious source of everything. [4] The ocean, rivers and lakes are personified, deified, invoked and worshipped. A pretty large section of the nature-poetry of the Rig-Veda consists of hymns to this element, whether in cloud-form or liquid-form.

The confluence of waters, in particular is an extremely impressive and elevating phenomenon to the

(1) उसतीरिव मातरः
(2) यासां देवा दिवि कृण्वन्ति भक्षं।
(3) या अंतरिक्षे बहुधाभवन्ति।
(4) आपो वा इदं सर्वम्।

cultured as well as the uncultured mind. On holy days the Hindus make it a point, wherever thay can, to bathe where rivers branch off or join (*Nadee-sangamā*) or join the sea (*Sāgara-sangamā*).

The most wonderful of all such watery phenomena to the Indian mind must have been the confluence of two oceans at Dhanushkoti Point. What particular confluence the mystic Vedic bard had in his mind, when he compared the clash of the waves of two extensive sheets of water to [1] "the kicking of the heels of the babe in the womb" is not known. But the only place where such a grand phenomenon could have been observed in ancient or in modern India is where the Bay of Bengal called "*The Mahodadhi*," mixes with the Indian Ocean, locally called *the Ratnakara*. Sri Rama is said to have bridged the gulf in his invasion of Ceylon. But on his return, he broke up the bridge at two or three places at the request of Vibheeshana to prevent future invasions. The grandeur of the meeting of the waters and the religious sanctity connected with Rama's bridge, combine to inspire the mind of the pilgrim at *Dhanushkoti Point*. Rama, according to the *Skanda Purana*, broke with the end of his bow the *Setu* at this place in compliance with the request of *Vibheeshana* (see Chapter IX. On Teerthams). Or could the name have been derived from the bow-like shape of the South-West coast of the island of *Rameswaram*, the point of it at the bridge being called the Bow-point or *Dhanushkoti*.

II

The "SETU" is an ancient Sanskrit word for a bridge or a causeway across a stream, probably conform-

(1) See the extract from the Yajur-Veda.—App. E.

ing to its Etymology (**सह इतुं गन्तुं शक्यते अनेनेति सेतुः**) It also seems to have been used in classical Sanskrit literature for an embankment to prevent the overflow of waters. Hence the metaphor [1] "*Nissetu*" and "*Tchinnasetu*" for one who breaks the laws of society and honour, which set a limit to a person's activities, but the word has become a proper name to denote the Ocean-bridge of Rama. The English substitute for it, *viz.*, "Adam's Bridge" is in no way appropriate.

Adam's name has nothing to do with the ocean-bridge, unless one fancies that after the curse, he and his wife crossed over to Ceylon, in the course of their wanderings, by making a bridge or by using an already existing one. In that case, where are we to think that Cain and Abel were born? Mohametan tradition holds (see Chapter V. 6 below) that Cain in his wanderings came to Rameswaram and buried his brother Abel's body, at the place where he saw a pair of crows fighting, one of them being killed. He later on returned to the same place to die and be buried by the side of his brother.

Two long horizontal tomb-like structures in a mosque, a little to the south of the Rameswaram Railway Station, are thought to hold the bones of this first pair of brothers. But the Bible does not say that Cain felt any compunction or carried the dead body of his brother on his back to find a proper place for its burial. He simply roamed abroad as an outcast and a murderer; and married from some other tribe and multiplied his race. From the book of the *Genesis*, we infer that he ran away from Eden after receiving the curse from the Lord.

---

(1) **निस्सेतो भिन्नवृत्तस्य पापस्योन्मार्गवर्तिनः।**
See Bhag. Pur. X. i, 36-23.

III

The *Setu* seems to be more strongly linked the rather with the tradition of *Rama's* invasion of *Lanka*, and we can imagine the rapture of a pilgrim on encountering it after his long land-journey from North India. Even in these days, with ample facilities for travelling and rapid locomotion, one cannot help feeling the rapture of the pilgrim at the sight of the grand phenomenon of two oceans making advances to each other, on either side as he nears the Mandapam Station. The temporary meeting of the Bay and the Ocean at Pamban is again interrupted by the pleasant island of *Rameswaram* with its sand-dunes and forests of umbrella trees (locally called '*Odai*') here and there interrupted by small villages and cocoanut and plantain topes; and after the train leaves Pamban one feels oneself to be voyaging in the midst of angry waters rather than travelling by train. After wondering sufficiently at the Pier and the Steamers and the influx and efflux of passengers to and from Ceylon, one gets down at Dhanushkoti station and trudges along the sands to the point, where the Bay and the Ocean seem to clasp each other in an eager embrace, and feels that it is one of the grandest and most impressive scenes that the earth has to show. A gentleman who had come there on official business from Ootacamund observed to me that the spectacle held him spell-bound for the space of one whole hour from sun-rise. On some one remarking that there was no temple at Dhanushkoti, the gentleman observed that Dhanushkoti was Nature's own temple where the Gazer's spirit came into direct touch with the Infinite. I believe that at this place all visitors, even those made indifferent by business-aims or by the

PLATE VI.—Showing the full view of the Viaduct from Tonitural to the otherside of the Pamban island.

possession of an "*alter-credo*", will experience a similar feeling to that of the pilgrim—an exaltation combined with a chastening of the spirit, a sublime feeling of humiliation and wonder at the sight of the Indian Ocean, dark, heaving boundless, endless and sublime—the image of Eternity, the throne of the Invisible.

IV

The old-world pilgrim is content with this sublime feeling and religious rapture and immerses himself presently in a whirl of ceremonial baths and offerings; but many doubts, chiefly of a historical and geological nature rise up in the cultured, modern mind after the first wave of rapture and awe has passed.

(*a*) When did *Rama* live? Was he a historical person and could *Ravana*, the ten-headed Demon and the monkeys be anything but the allegorical conceptions of a poet's fertile imagination? Do any etymological truths glimmer behind them?

(*b*) Could the *Setu* have been constructed by monkeys though instructed by human beings, considering the fact that the South Indian Railway Company with all its resources of wealth, science, labour and skill has abandoned the project of a huge Ocean-bridge between Ceylon and the Mainland estimated at some hundreds of crores of Rupees? Was ever any bridge constructed? Or did the Setu merely consist of a chain of rocks and islets linked up with some labour by the troops of Rama?

(*c*) Where did the *Setu* originally begin? *Darbha-sayanam* 7 miles south of Ramnad is said to

be the *Adisetu* (first Setu). Was a bridge attempted there at first and abandoned ? Was Dhanushkoti found to be more convenient ? Where was Ravana's Lanka ? Was it the same as present-day Ceylon ? The Pamban passage is said to have been an isthmus before the Railway Company began its work but in the Madura Guide Book, I find that Krishnama Naik (16th century) followed in the foot-steps of Rama and got the huge breaches in the Pamban causeway repaired when he invaded Ceylon.

From the monograph on "*The Relations between India and Ceylon*" (1) by Mr. U. P. Kukillya of Trivandrum, it is seen that there had been frequent invasions of Ceylon from the time it was first colonised by the Aryan prince, Vijaya from North India in the 6th century B.C. The invasions became more frequent as the relations with *Pandya* and *Chola* kingdoms increased. Now coolies are being taken from India to Ceylon. At one time as many as 12,000 artisans were brought over to the Pandya country from Ceylon and were later on recovered by King Gajabahu (2nd century A.D.) in the course of a peaceful visit to the Pandya King. From the 4th century A. D. to the 17th century, the history of Ceylon "presents one long series of Tamil immigrations". It also shows in the centuries before Christ a conflict with varying results between *Buddhism* and *Brāhminism*. The influence of Brahminism was felt as early as the 3rd century B.C. during the time of *Elara*, the Chola prince who established himself in Ceylon. King *Gajabahu* of the

(1) His Thesis for the M.A. Degree Examination in 1907 printed at Madras.

2nd century A.D. is said to have brought to Ceylon the foot-ornaments of the Goddess *Pattini Devi.*

The transport of armies and large bands of colonists must have involved the use of ships on a large scale. There are accounts of armies landing on the coast of Ceylon for the help of King *Erala* in the 3rd century B.C. The Setu must have been frequently broken up by the rulers of Ceylon, in order to obstruct the invaders. But the fertility of Ceylon made it too attractive to the adventurers from the mainland to be so easily given up. There is little light regarding the relations between India and Ceylon, from the time of Rama to the time of Vijaya in the 6th century B.C. But it is improbable that Rama's pioneer adventure was not imitated by succeeding generations of Aryans. Notable conquests of Ceylon seem to have taken place in the 7th, 10th and 16th centuries.

In the following sections I propose to deal with the questions raised in this at some length and shall be happy if the reader is able to find satisfaction in any of the suggestions thrown out in the course of the discussion.

V

The events of the *Rama-Ravana* story celebrated in our first epic cannot be dated though the epic is judged by Prof. Keith to be not later than the 3rd century B.C.

The epic was orally sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument by the disciples of the bard, and interpolations might have crept in, in the course of generations. The defeat of the Brahman warrior, *Parasurama,* at the hands of the *Kshatriya* hero cannot be dated,

because there are frequent traces in the Vedas themselves of the inter-caste struggle for supremacy. The whole of the Rama story itself may be said to mark the success of the Kshatriyas in asserting their equality with the Brahman though *Rama* himself was represented as a strong upholder of the caste system. It is not possible to say at what particular stage in the history of the Indo-Aryans such a struggle began or culminated. The slokas that speak of *Rama* as an incarnation of *Vishnu* are also supposed to be later interpolations, but they are vital to the text of *Valmeeki*, wherever they occur. The visit to the sage *Sarabangha* and the appearance of *Indra* then, as well as later on after the battle with *Ravana*, the opportune appearance of the sage *Agastya* and of *Garuda* on the battle-field serve the double purpose of helping on the plot and indicating the divinity of the hero. Besides, the way in which Vishnu is appointed by the assembly of the Gods to see to Ravana's death is reminiscent of Vedic conditions and has little of puranic function. Even the slokas which show a knowledge of the signs of the Zodiac (which is supposed to be exclusively Greek by Western scholars) may have been genuinely *Valmeeki's*. They occur only at the birth of *Rama*. Besides, there is no reason to suppose that the Greek invasion of Alexander was the first source of contact between the cultures of the East and the West. If Greek influence is proved in this instance, it only shows the date of the interpolated passage, not of the epic. Much less does it help to date the events. The other important passage regarded as an interpolation is that wherein Rama resents Jâbâlee's advice that the words of a demented and senile parent need not be taken as gospel and that self-interest is higher than any other duty, and

launches into an abuse of Buddhistic atheism as ruinous to the existence of society and order. This passage does not seem to be quite relevant and looks suspicious but cannot help us to date the epic. The interpolation may refer to the Brahminic reaction against Buddhism but the epic need not. No other reference to Buddhism is to be found in the epic. Its [1] archaisms in grammar and the close resemblance of its legends [2] to those of the Rig-Veda, the absence of any reference to the lunar dynasty of Kings or to the other great epic which celebrates them, the unquestioned tradition that *Valmeeki* was the first noteworthy regular poet outside the vedic literature, refer back its composition to the days of the early *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads.*

The close kinship of the Gangetic tribes like the *Kosalas* with those of *Gandhara* (Kandahar) points to the days of early colonisation, whereas the events of the sister epic refer to the internecine feuds of a settled empire in Hindustan.

Valmeeki tells us that the story of *Rama* was a family tradition with the *Ikshwaku* race of Kings. By his time, it must have been a very [3] ancient tradition. We can only say that Rama was one of the earliest of the most adventurous of Indo-Aryan Heroes. The best of western scholars are not unanimous in regard to the dates allotted to the various periods of vedic

(1) For example " Paschime " giraye *namash* ", and Pradeeyatam dasarathaya maithilea."

(2) The legend of Sunahsepa is nearly the same here as in the Aitaraya Brahmana.

(3) Valmeeki simply says that the story is a "great tradition among the race of the *Ikshwakus* ". At the end of the Yuddhakanda the past tense is used in talking of Rama's reign (Rano rajyam akarayat). A contemporary would not have used it.

literature and the Vedic language and all conjectures in regard to the phonetic changes in the sacred language of the most tenacious and conservative of the world religions must be content to remain such till surer evidence confirm them. Classical Sanskrit was the popular contemporary form of the language of the Vedas at least of the Brahmins. The earliest known bard of it (Valmeeki) must have lived long before *Panini* codified its grammar in the 7th or 8th century B.C.....the date suggested for the latter by Goldstucker. Valmeeki's hero, *Rama* must have lived long before him.

VI

The antiquity of the Setu and that of *Rama's* adventures go together. The extract from the Yajur Veda (No. II in Appendix E) contemplates two vast seas that clash with each other "like the feet of a babe in the womb" and a *Setu* that bridges an ocean whose farther shore is invisible. But the passage is also interpreted in the light of some sacrificial ceremony and the arrangement of vessels and cups used therein. But the extract from the *Rig-Veda* (see No. I in Appendix E) is interpreted by the Etymologist, *Yaska*, in the light of the *Rama* story, which must therefore have been popular and well-known in its time. *Yaska*, the etymologist referred to above, the author of a *Nirukta*, is dated about 800 B.C. by western *savants*. The *Manu Smriti* (see Appendix E) is dated about 500 B.C. Unrecorded popular tradition in such a conservative community was very likely to have had Rama's story in circulation and wondering contemplation for ages before *Manu* and *Yaska*.

The normal Indian calculation puts the Rama-story in the *Tretayuga*, about a million years back. Critics laugh and sneer, but the life of man on the face of the globe is now declared by geologists to be billions and trillions and more. Let not the Indian astronomers lose heart. Who knows, modern science may find itself compelled to confirm the validity of their traditional calculations!

VII

Let us now turn to the question whether the whole story of the struggle with *Ravana* and the alliance with the monkeys is to be treated as allegorical as it appears to some scholars. Some others see in the whole story a distant echo of the tale of the fall of Troy and of the abduction of Helen. A strong Ikshwaku family tradition, that *Valmeeki* testifies to, could not have been a mere echo of the tradition of another nation wafted over a large continent. The Pandya Kings had frequent troubles with the Ceylonese and *vice versa.* The Pallava King Narasimha Varma I conquered Ceylon in the 10th century and in the 12th century Parakramabahu of Ceylon invaded the mainland. Krishnama Naik of Madura invaded Ceylon in the 16th century. And the probability of a southern emigration of the Aryans is approved by most scholars, even by Prof. A. C. Das of Calcutta who tries to explode the theory of an Arctic home and makes Hindustan (the Sapta Sindhu) the original and central abode of the Aryan Race.

Modern science seems to favour the view that strange and weird forms of animal existence must have flourished in geological ages and esoteric doctrine seems to hold that the combination of animal and human forms was a

common phenomenon in the days of the Third Root Race of men (The Cyclops and the Giants) and according to the same doctrine of the Mystics, the Third Root Race inhabited the vast submerged southern continent conveniently designated by scientists as Lemuria (the abode of the Monkey Race).

" Lemuria is an ancient continent now sunk beneath the waters of the Indian Ocean which, lying to the South of Asia of to-day, stretched on the one hand eastwards to Upper India and Sunda Island, and on the other westward as far as Madagascar and Africa ". From Ernest Hackel's " Pedigree of Man " Aveling's translation, pp. 80-81.

" The sinking and transformation of Lemuria began nearly at the Arctic circle (Norway) and the Third race ended its career in Lanka, or rather on that which became Lanka with the Atlanteans. The *small remnant* now known as Ceylon is the Northern highland or ancient Lanka, while the enormous Island of that name was in the Lemurian period, the gigantic continent already described. (See Madame Blavatsky's " The Secret Doctrine, Vol. II, p. 347).

Who can tell if the old Indian bard was or was not justified in vividly bodying forth strange forms of semi-human demons and monkeys with whom his human heroes came into contact ? Who can be offended if he merely wove them out of his fancy ? Who can be offended with Milton for having given human forms to his angels both fallen and pure ? If his angels could assume shapes at will, why not allow the same privilege to the creations of the old Indian bard's fancy backed up by the traditions of his country ? Setting the bard's physical delineation of these southern races aside, he seems to treat them as

human beings in their politics and their social intercourse. To treat these vivid personages as allegorical is to ignore the meaning of the word Allegory. Not that we are not at liberty to draw what lessons and inferences we please for spiritual and scientific purposes, but that Valmeeki's creations are full-blooded complex human beings such as we are, such as the creations of bards and dramatists are. They are not lean abstractions thinly veiled with personification. You cannot say that *Ravana* himself is represented as all-evil. That is far from the impartial aestheticism of Valmeeki's poetic creed.

To sum up the discussion under this head, the *Rama-Ravana* struggle seems to me to be real and historical, though the events belong to the immemorial past of the Indo-Aryan emigration to the south. The strange *Rakshasas* and *Vanaras* might have been remnants of older and strangely featured races of men still partly inhabiting the south of India which was becoming geographically sundered from the gradually submerging southern continent of Lemuria, the strangeness of features having been strongly accentuated through misty tradition ere it reached the poet's ears and then further exaggerated by his strong imagination. The modern cultured minds which are raising temples and memorials to their poets and national heroes, making pilgrimages to their birth-places and celebrating their anniversaries and tercentenaries and establishing societies of select worshippers to cultivate the memory of the dead can easily understand and fraternise with the Indian, whose apotheosis of the ancient heroes and seers of his land is akin thereto and appreciate his tenacious perpetuation of their memory through long aeons. Pilgrims to Stratford-on-Avon and Waterloo can feel, if they like, a bond of unity

with the pilgrims to the Setubandha where their earliest and greatest national hero did miracles to regain his own, to punish the wicked, and to re-establish the rule of *Dharma* between man and man.

VIII

The bridging of the abode of crocodiles, whales and sharks must have been nothing short of a stupendous miracle such as only the Giant Ages inspired by the spirit of the Universe could turn out and manifest. Imagination staggers at the conception of such a task. Can the favour of the sea-God to *Rama* be interpreted as a coincidence between Rama's advent and a Providential recession of the sea (as in the case of the Israelites when they crossed the Red Sea) laying bare a till-then-submerged chain of islets linking Ceylon to the mainland ? The *Padma Purana* even says that owing to the fears of *Vibheeshana*, *Ravana's* successor *Rama* destroyed the bridge and cut it into three parts, separated by two channels one and ten *Yojanas* in breadth respectively. Ceylonese tradition still points to a submerged place near the sea-shore somewhat to the south of Colombo, as the place where *Ravana* fell. Worship is still offered to *Rama* in that place and men go thither in boats. A careful examination of these places may help one to trace the old geography of the Indo-Ceylonese land-connection which forms, in spite of hyperbolical accounts of its extent and its miraculous construction, the essential foundation for our first epic. Such a phenomenal bridge, whatever the omniscient globe-trotter and circumnavigator might say, must have been a supreme manifestation of Providential aid of incalculable importance, especially to the Indo-Aryan invader of yore with

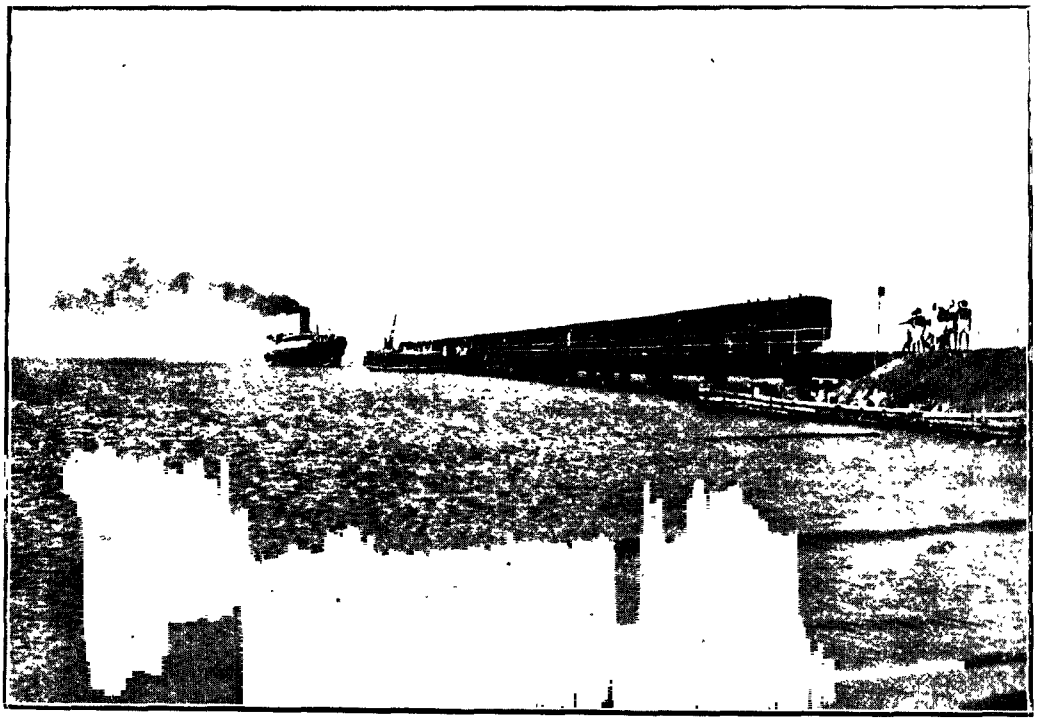


PLATE VII.—Showing the full length of the Boat Mail rake on the Pier at Dhanushkodi and the arrival of S.S. " Elgin " from Talaimannar.

his experience confined till that moment to mountains and rivers, forests and plains and snow, heat and rain.

IX

Where was the Lanka of the Ten-headed Demon situated? The Setu is said to have been a hundred *yojanas* long, that is, about 800 miles. This was the distance between the mainland and Lanka. But now between *Dhanushkoti* and Talaimannar Pier the distance is only 21 miles; between Tuticorin and Colombo, it is only about a hundred miles. Here the ocean is deep. At Tiruchendur, a coast-town 36 miles east of Tinnevelly, the elevated place on which the temple of God *Kumara* stands is called Mount *Gandhamaadana.* The coast of Travancore seems to have its own local legends here and there connecting it with *Rama's* story. Valmeeki himself however seems to contemplate a directly southern direction for his *Setu* from the mainland of India and a directly northern direction from Lanka. The capital of *Ravana* was situated on a hill within a *day's march* from the southern extremity of Rama's bridge. The *Dhanushkoti-Talaimannar* route is in a south-easterly direction. Perhaps the shape of the gulf of Mannar has also altered since Rama's days. In those days, the coast was perhaps straighter and Rama's troops were not obliged to go in a south-eastern direction to the place where the ocean confronted them. There seems to be strong evidence to support the theory that the *Setu* began at *Dharbasayanam,* 6 miles south of Ramnad. The capital of the Zemindari itself was shifted to the present Ramnad from Bogaloor 10 miles directly west of it. Local tradition in Rameswaram reports, that the *Setu* was near Rameswaram about 90 years ago, and that it shifted nearer to *Kodandaraman Koil*

within living memory. The sea seems to have receded 5 miles within the last 60 years.

What is now the Pamban Channel was a stone-causeway thrown across the strait by a King, Krishnama Naik of Madura, in the 16th Century when he invaded Ceylon. Handsome statues of him and his father may be seen on either side of the Nandi in the Rameswaram temple. The South Indian Railway report says that he followed exactly the route of *Rama*. This is doubtful. If the *Setu* began at *Dharbasayanam (Adi Setu)* south of Ramnad, *Rama* could not have taken the Pamban route at all.

The conclusion seems to be forced on one, that the sea has been gradually receding more and more towards Ceylon and that the face of Ceylon itself has changed considerably. The Encyclopædia Britannica holds that "Ceylon has been for ages rising from the sea as appears from the traces abounding in marine shells, which occur in situations far above high-water mark and at some miles from the sea". In the face of this inevitable inference, it seems to be idle to make an attempt to identify *Rama's Setu* and *Ravana's* capital and the *Mount Thrikuta* of Ceylon on which it was situated. Perhaps Ceylon did not extend so much to the north of its central mountain range as it does now. *Valmeeki* speaks of mountains in Lanka and perennial hill-streams in *Ravana's* gardens but does not speak of any notable river. It is very likely that the extent of the *Setu*, as he gives it, is comparatively speaking not so very exaggerated, as it seems from the distance between the Piers at Dhanushkoti and Talaimannar. The distance between Colombo and Tuticorin may give us an idea of the probable extent of the old land connection between the mainland and Ceylon. Traces of land connection have

been discovered between India the Malaya-Archipelago and even Australia. The Bushmen of Australia are identified in feature and language with the copper coloured Dravidian race of South India. But on this ground we cannot admit the fancy of some that *Ravana's* Lanka might have been situated near Australia. The *Ramayana* allows only a month's rapid march on foot from *Kishkinda* to the edge of the southern ocean for the huge army of *Sugreva*. Besides, *Sugreva* speaks of the famous golden and pearl-decked gate of the *Pandyas* (*Tato himamayam divyam muktamani vibhushitam yuktam kavatam pandyanam*) at the mouth of the *Tamraparni*, in the farthest south just before reaching the sea. *Sugreva* says that there was a lovely mountain called *Mayendra* in that spot, and on the other side of the ocean was an island a hundred *yojanas* in extent belonging to *Ravana*. It is most likely that India and *Ravana's* Lanka occupied in the time of *Valmeeki*, much the same position relatively that they now do. Only the sea's vagaries seem to have altered the extent and form of the strait separating them, narrowing it and widening it in different places, at different times.

These suggestions are offered in the hope that they will at least provoke and promote a feeling of reverent inquiry even where they fail to convince or satisfy. The genuine pilgrim will give his due value to such doubts and discussions, but look to the main issue, namely the purification of his body and soul in the places sanctified by the foot-steps of the ancient hero, who toiled for *Dharma* and who has through his valour, nobleness, and purity, come to be regarded as an incarnation of the supreme spirit of the Universe, that which loveth and maketh for righteousness.

CHAPTER III.

THE SETU-YATRA

I

The *Setu* is one of the few places of pilgrimage which attract men of all religious sects in India, the other two being Benares, and Puri (Jagannath). Better still than the others, the *Setu* attempts '*Sarvamatha Sammelan*' the commingling of many religions; for moslem tradition places the graves of Cain and Abel opposite Rameswaram Railway Station, and Ramnad is famous as the seat of the Jesuit John De Brito's activities in the 17th century and of his martyrdom, which took place on a hill, three or four miles from Ramnad, the place attracting Hindu pilgrims also, like the mosque and tomb of Meera Sahib at Nagoor in the Tanjore District.

II

Tradition has fixed the programme of the pilgrim to the *Setu* from the time he reaches Ramnad. Till then he is free to follow his own fancy—he can visit the famous shrines of Conjeevaram and Chidambaram, Kumbakonam, Tanjore, Srirangam, Jambugeswaram, (Tiruvanaikkaval) and Madura on the forward journey or on the return. But once he reaches Ramnad, he has to follow the traditional path that Rama is said to have trodden in the quest of a convenient place from which to bridge the ocean. It seems he first worshipped the *Veyyilugantha Vinayakar* at Uppoor, 20 miles north-east of Ramnad. The temple is an open one and Rama is said to have established it before beginning his bridge. A few miles south of Uppoor is Devipatnam

popularly called *Navapashanam*, a small coast-town and port, where nine stones set upright in the shallow bay are said to have been planted by *Rama* to represent the nine planets (the Sun being in the centre) whom he worshipped for the success of his endeavour.

The pilgrim should proceed to Dhanushkoti direct from *Navapashanam* But his path to Dhanushkoti is dotted with a number of *Tirthams* or holy waters, which he must dip into, if he wishes himself well. The *Ananda Ramayana* makes *Rama* himself undertake a pilgrimage to the *Setu* sometime after his coronation :—

Yuddakanda, Canto 9, Sloka 28 and following :—

"(*Rama*) bowed to *Vighneswara* established by himself before (at Uppoor), bathed at *Navapashanam*, went to Devipatnam, bathed in the *Vetala Teertham* (*at Vedalai*), crossed the strait (junction of the sea, the sea's flood), bathed in the *Bhairava Theertha*, at Pamban and reached his own shrine called *Ekanta* (Solititude). He got down from the aero-car (*Vimana*) with all his retinue, proceeded on foot to *Lakshmana Gunda*, bathed in it, and also in the holy pool known by his own name. Then he bathed at the *Agnitheertha*, at *Dhanushkoti*, and at the *Jatai-teertha*. Then after visiting Gandhamadhana Hill, he first bowed to Viswanadha brought by Hanuman formerly, and then worshipped Rameswara pouring water from the Ganges on him. He threw glass-ware, pots, etc., in Dhanushkoti. With his bow-point he pierced an excellent spring called *Kodi-Teertham*. And then to complete the washing away of sins, he paid a visit to the white Madhava [1] ; gave many gifts and stayed a month.

(1) Sveta Madhava (an image of Vishnu in white coral) in a small temple behind the shrine of Sri Ramanatha and occupying a portion in the western half of the temple. He is now called Setu Madhava, obviously owing to the association with the Setu.

The celestial spectators in their aero-cars were much pleased. For complete purification Rama bathed in *Kodi-Theertham*. (again)"

Proceed from Navapashanam or Devipatnam to Vetala Theertham at Vedalai west of Mandapam; then after crossing the Pamban channel (*sagarasya ogham*—current of the sea) proceed to *Bhairava Theertha*, and *Ekanta Rama Temple* (near Thangachimadam Railway Station where Rama is said to have held a council of war away from the noise of the sea, while the bridge was building. The above passage ignores a number of small theerthams and tanks between these two, which seem to have sprung up in later times, such as the *Mangala Theertha*, *Ranavimochana Theertha*, which contain even now very good water and are filled with "day lotus" and "night-lotus." But the South Indian Railway makes this course inconvenient. After Ramnad, people prefer go direct to Dhanushkoti.

Drawing near Rameswaram itself one has to fit one self for the *Setu* by a clean shave and a bath in the *Lakshmana Gunda*. Then there is the *Rama Gunda* about a furlong to the east of it. All over Rameswaram, there are a number of Theerthams in the shape of small ponds and wells generally with some holy shrine or image in their vicinity. The pilgrim can take his own time with regard to baths at all these *theerthams*. But a bath in the coral-reefed bay of *Agnitheertha* directly in front of the eastern gate of the temple is more important. Within the temple, there are a number of wells and ponds containing fresh water and there is also one big tank called the *Madhava Theertha* in the western portion with flights of stonesteps all round.

The baths in Rameswaram follow the bath at Dhanushkoti, and the bath at the *Kodi Theertham*, in the inner temple is final and the holy water of it is taken home by pilgrims in sealed cans.

III

The South Indian Railway has disturbed the old route of the pilgrims and broken up the old routine of baths. It has also thrown into disuse a number of chatrams lying on the old roads leading to Rameswaram from the Tinnevelly side (such as those at Tiruchuli, Kadugusandai, Sikkal and Alanganur) and from the Madura side (such as those at Attangarai, Mandapam and Pamban). A few however like those at Manamadura, Paramakudi, Bogaloor and Uppoor are still frequented by pilgrims and are in good condition.

At Rameswaram itself, there are a number of chatrams maintained by private charity, which offer tolerably convenient lodgings to the pilgrim according to his status and caste. Of these the Ramnad Rajah's choultry, Venkata Row's choultry and the Tanjore Rajah's choultry, seem to be the best. There are a few maintained by rich marwaris for the benefit of North Indian pilgrims. They are carefully managed. The Mahabir Mahal choultry near the Railway Station is also decent, but it is not generally resorted to. Probably its being outside the town makes most pilgrims prefer other choultries to this. It is highily desirable that neat, secure and healthy accommodation, like that in Mangammal's choultry in Madura, should be available for the pilgrim who can pay, but does not care to be under the dubious hospitality of the Pandas. The Devasthanam should undertake this business and the town union should offer all facilities

for the same. The investment will be a boon to the pilgrim and at the same time a source of income to the Devesthanam.

"The pleasure of a pilgrimage lies much in the difficulties endured and overcome" was the remark made by an old gentleman of my acquaintance who had travelled much, in response to a query regarding the available facilities for the pilgrim at some of the places *enroute* to Rameswaram. In fact, pilgrimages in olden days were an education and solace for the whole life-time of a person.

IV

Regarding the *Snanavidhana*, baths are enjoined almost in every well or pond that is to be found on Mount Gandhamadana. The whole region of the Ramnad District seems to be regarded as Mount Gandhamadana. The *Skanda Purana* speaks of every Theertham from Ramnad eastward as situated on the Mount and Tiruchendur in Tinnevelly District claims to be also situated on the same. Probably there was a long range of hills covered everywhere with odoriferous trees making one giddy with their heavy fragrance, fringing the coast in the south-eastern corner of India. The *Kritamala* and the *Tamraparni* are mentioned in the *Ramayana*, and this range is reached only after crossing them.

Something of the sanctity attached to these many springs may be due to the scarcity of drinking water on the island of Rameswaram. The Lakshmana Theertham and Rama Theertham are brackish. Only a few of the springs in the temple offer good drinking water. Malaria is fast disappearing from Rameswaram since the supply through pipes, of percolated rain water collected in wells, 20 to 25 feet in depth, in the sandy plain near

Nambinayaki Ammankoil two miles to the south-west of Rameswaram.

But the pligrim will consult his health and convenience with regard to the baths in these various Theerthams. Piety may satisfy itself with sprinkling a little of the water on the head and even this may prove an ordeal. The names of sages like *Agastya*, *Galava*, and *Koundinya*, of Gods and Goddesses like *Brahma*, *Saraswathi*, *Savitri*, *Gayatri*, of abstract virtues like *Ranavimochana* (freeing from debts or sins) *Mangala* (giving prosperity) *Amirtha* (giving immortality) of the many servants and friends of Rama like *Sugreva*, *Hanuman*, *Jambavan*, *Angada*, *Nala*, *Neela*, *Gaja*, *Gayaya*, are freely indented upon for these various springs and ponds. It is surprising to find even the names of *Vaali* and the *Pandavas* among them. A solitary beggar often trims a dim lamp in a small niche or shrine on the bank of many of these, which are in a very neglected condition, and begs for alms. It is probable that those which bear the name of sages and divinities owe their sanctity to the association with the abode and penance of some hermit of old that might have chosen to settle in that sacred place.

Baths are indispensable, however, at three places—(i) at the Lakshmana Gunda, which may be said to begin the course of worship; (ii) Dhanushkoti, and (iii) at Kodi-Theertham within the inner court of the temple, the water of which is daily used for the bath of the images and the worship. It is the water of this last that is taken home by pilgrims in sealed vessels on the day of departure, though Brahmins are required to take instead, the water of another well called *Sarva Theertham*, also in the inner Prakara. The

water of these is good but that of the spring in the temple-kitchen (madappalli) is much better and very healthy and has even the freshness of river water. The wells in the compound of the *Madhava Temple* also yield good drinking water. Besides, they are open to the sun unlike the others and are almost as much used as they.

V

At *Lakshmana Gunda*, the pilgrim has, after the first plunge with *Sankalpam*, to go to the barber who waits under the huge tamarind tree outside or in a small tiled shed erected for the purpose a few yards off. After this cleansing, he has to go again to the *Theertham* and bathe in it. Then he has to offer oblations with raw rice and flour to all the dead of his clan the *pitris* on his mother's and father's side, and make *Tharphanams* to them with water and sesamum seed (*Tila*). The ceremony is somewhat trying; then with, a cocoanut. some plantains, flowers, *pansupari* (betel and nut) and camphor, he has to approach the Lingam, *Lakshmaneswara* on the bank. With this purification the *Setu-yatra Deeksha* may be said to begin.

At Dhanushkoti (the point where the bay and the ocean meet) the pilgrim is asked to bathe first in a small lagoon by the shore of the Indian Ocean (Ratnakara), (formed by the flowing tide). This bath is called the *Malavimochana Snana* (bath for the removal of all uncleanness). After this, the *Sankalpa* begins. With sand and crude coloured palm-leaf ear-rings in hand, the pilgrim is required to address the *kritya* (demoness) or evil spirit guarding the waters and causing terror to the world; and request her to accept the sand-offering for her food and allow him to bathe in the waters. (This same

formula [1] is used in the sea baths at Agni-theertha in Rameswaram, as also at Navapashanam and Dharbasayanam).

Then he is permitted to bathe in the calm pool in the bay just protected from the furious waves of the Indian Ocean by a narrow spit of sand.

The number of baths prescribed at the Setu is three dozens and the stay recommended is for about a month. Pilgrims mostly perform all the 36 baths in three days or even in one day according to their convenience. An old lady declared that the pilgrimage to the *Setu* was a purification and a sort of re-birth, and that therefore one should stay there 9 months, or 9 weeks, or at least 9 days. The number 9 may be utilized to excuse even a shorter stay on the part of a pious pilgrim hard-pressed for time (say an official on short leave), the bath at the Setu and the worship of Rameswara being the prime things for which he goes there and from which he hopes for absolution from all sins, protection for the future in the pilgrimage of life and salvation at its close.

VI

The usual *vaidic* water and rice-offerings to the *manes* of the dead is insisted upon and the pilgrim cheerfully undergoes the ordeal that through him his whole clan may be blessed, for it is not given to all the members of the family to make this arduous pilgrimage.

This *pitri*-worship is insisted upon at all the important *theerthams* especially after the baths in rivers

(1) Here is the formula : Pippalada Samutpanne kritya lokabhayankari saikatam te maya dattam agarartham prakalpyatam.

and seas and in the chief tanks (*pushkarnis*) attached to famous temples. Following the *pitri worship* there is a schedule of 16 *Danams* or gifts which will secure *Mukthi* to one's ancestors, prosperity in this life and final salvation to oneself. It is a remarkable feature of this pilgrimage that all classes and castes of Hindus (excepting the toddy-drawers and panchamas) are admitted to this *pitri-worship* and to the privilege of making gifts. The gift of a cow is deemed highly efficacious as it is supposed to facilitate the passage of the soul to Heaven across the *Vaitarani* (the river of fire). At Devipatnam (*Navapashanam*) and at Dhanushkoti the gifts are to be made in a spirit of pure renunciation; for. in this pilgrimage one has realised the highest ambition of one's life.

VII

Dhanushkoti village.—The sea is said to have receded five miles in the last sixty years. About the middle of the last century, the bathing place seems to have been four miles to the west of the present Dhanushkoti Railway Station. Here is a small Chatram or traveller's shed which is now utilised by the Railway mile-coolies. From Dhanushkoti village and the Chetty's choultry therein, the bathing place is a three miles walk,[1] along the sands. This choultry must have been at its first construction very near the bathing place. The Tanjore Rajah's Choultry is half a mile from this towards the *Setu* and that seems to mark another stage in the recession of the sea. The building seems to be in hourly danger from the waves of the Indian Ocean; but is pretty elevated and substantially built.

(1) Bandies are available at Dhanushkoti but the hire for the journey to and fro from the bathing ghat is about three rupees.

PLATE VIII.—Showing the Holy Bath at the Sacred Sethu—where the two oceans unite.

For drinking water, however, this chatram has to depend upon the village where springs of fresh water exist, especially near the Post Office.

There are small bazaars near the Chetty's choultry which supply butter-milk, vegetables and other things to the pilgrim but at a comparatively higher cost than at Rameswaram. Milk can be had but is costly and cannot be expected to be pure. There are two or three coffee-hotels too and one is very near the Railway Station. At this latter, food is also supplied at convenient hours.

VIII

The *Setu-snana* should be followed by the visit to *Sri Ramanatha Swami* at Rameswaram; and in the case of Brahmins, by a theerthavidhi also (that is a regular *Srardha* in honour of the *Manes* according to one's resources).

The baths in the various theerthams within and without the temple may be performed at the convenience of the pilgrim. The local priests are indispensable guides. As for the worship of *Ramanatha Swami*, a printed sheet in English and Hindi is available at the office of the Peishkar of the temple which is open from 6 A. M. to 10 P. M. at which hours the daily round of worship closes. The pilgrim can choose the particular form of worship which his means permit and benefit by the grace of *Sree Rameswara* and his consort *Parvata-Vardhani Ambal.*

The pilgrimage closes practically with the bath in the *Kodi-Theertham*, the securing of some of its water in a sealed can, and the offering of a cocoanut and flowers to *Setu-Madhava Swami* the fine image in white coral of

Maha Vishnu who is considered to be the warden of the holy place. For the bath in the *Kodi-Theertham*, a toll of three pies per head is levied by the lessee of the *Kodi-Theertham*.

IX

After finishing the baths, the worship and offerings at Dhanushkoti and Rameswaram, the pilgrim is to visit the *Adi-Setu*. Anyhow, he has to stop at Ramnad on his return journey for, "the last scene of the pilgrimage opens in the hall called *Ramalinga Vilas* within the precincts of the Ramnad Palace which contains the original stone on which the original Setupathi,[1] Guha himself was said to have been crowned by Rama. Unless homage is paid to the stone or to the living Setupathi in person, if he condescends to accept it, the pilgrimage is considered incomplete and has no merit."

When the pilgrim reaches his home, he will feast Brahmins, relatives and friends and give them the holy water he has brought. Pilgrims of the fair six seem to be very particular about mixing the sand that they bring from the Setu in the waters of the Ganges at Benares at their convenience. [2]

X

According to the Ananda Ramayana, great is the merit which accrues to one from a bath in the *Setu*. Rama himself is said to have visited it again some time after his coronation. The Pandavas are said to have visited it in the *Dwapara Yuga*. The *Bhagavata Purana* includes it in the programme of the illustrious

(1) See Chapter X (1).
(2) Probably this is an incentive to the pilgrim to complement the South Indian tour with one in North India.

pilgrim, Balarama while the great Bharata war was raging. Great sages like Agastya and his disciples performed penance on the ground sanctified by the *Setu*. Such is the prestige it has enjoyed.

And the great merit of this *yatra* is dwelt upon in every purana as may be seen from the extracts in the Appendix E.

I give here a part of the translation of the extract from *Skanda Purana* [1] which utters the most glowing praise about the *Setu* :—

" The *Setu-bandh* is said to partake of the divinity of all the Gods. Who can have the power to reckon up the merit of the one who looks upon it? A man, a Brahmin who looks upon the *Setu* is regarded as having performed all sorts of sacrifice. What is the use of many words? He who advises a person " go to the Setu " will get the merit of one who has bathed in all holy places and performed penance therein. The man who constantly meditates upon the Setu Rameswara Linga, and Mount Gandhamadhana will be rid of all sins. O, best of Brahmins: he who sleeps on the sands of the Setu and is smeared with the dust thereof, as many Brahmahatyas (sins of Brahmanicide) of his will be destroyed as there are particles of dust on his body without doubt. He whose body is touched by the breeze from over the *Setu*, ten-thousand drink-sins of his, will disappear that very moment."

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(1) See the Appendix.

CHAPTER IV.

RAMESWARAM

(The Island.)

The climate's delicate, the air most sweet,
Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing
The common praise it bears.

"SHAKESPEARE W. T., III. i."

I

The island of Rameswaram [1] in the southeast extremity of the Ramnad District, is like an obtuse angled triangle with the apex towards the north, in which elevated corner the town and temple of the same name are situated. It is thought that the present island was once connected with the mainland by the Isthmus of Pamban. But in the 15th century, a causeway was constructed by Krishnama Naik and damaged by storms subsequently. The *Ananda Ramayana* speaks of a current of the sea after Pamban—a *Sagarsya Ogham*. The island was once wholly covered with a stunted thorn-tree of the Babul (*Acacia Arabica*) family, bearing small white, starlike tufted flowers and having flattish spreading tops, somewhat like an umbrella, the long plastic twigs dangling like creepers. These twigs being fibrous are used by fishermen for plaiting, big box-like nets for catching fish in the bay. They do not yield gum but are good fuel.

(1) For this and the following chapters on the town and the temple, I have taken many details from the Ramnad Manual to supplement my information.

They are called *Odai.* Their berries are regarded as good fodder for cattle. But gum-yielding babul, Neem, Iluppai and other varieties of useful trees were grown in the island being part of the estate of Ramnad, as one of the many vigorous measures adopted for the improvement of the estate by the able manager T. Rajaram Rao under the Court of Wards (1880—1889). Puarisa and Mango thrive in Rameswaram soil. Palmyra trees abound, but the eye of the traveller, as he is whirled along in the train, is delighted with the sight of plantain and cocoanut groves. In this island the staple crops are maize and betel, though the vegetable required for the Indian table are cultivated in places. Good water is available at a tolerably high level and it is possible to extend such cultivation, considering the highly alkaline nature of the sandy soil. The drumstick grows in abundance and is of finer quality than elsewhere.

But the Rameswaram bazaar and vegetable market are mainly fed from outside and it goes hard with the pilgrims when the goods-train happens to arrive late on any day.

The plough is never used in cultivation on this island either because of the loose nature of the soil or because of some ancient prohibition. The latter is the popular opinion. The prohibition may be simply due to the holy associations; but in that case all instruments of agriculture would have been forbidden.

II

The island seems to have a coral basis and fishermen say that corals can be plucked in the bay. The ordinary variety of coral here is dirty brown in

colour. But one often meets with a small bit of pure white coral three inches long on the beach near the Chank stores near Rameswaram. Bits of half-formed coral and many kinds of coral stones are plentifully strewn about on the sands of the Bay near Rameswaram. The abundance of fresh water on the island in many of the wells, as well as the retention of percolated rain water on the extensive beach of the Indian Ocean to the south of Rameswaram, is sufficiently accounted for by the hard coral stone basis of this island. The beach of the Indian Ocean at Dhanushkoti is plentifully strewn with multi-coloured shells and coral tubes of wondrous variety of form and the imagination can easily comprehend the reason for its being called the Ratnakara (Store of precious stones). The bits of coral stone are treasured by women-folk and incorporated in their domestic *Pujapeetam*. They call them by a pious metaphorical name, the roots of turmeric that *Sita* had used. They also carry with them other treasures of the sea such as cowries, conches, and shells. These are also sold in heaps in the bazaar in the western corridor of the temple. Costly bangles and rings are made of chank shells. Bengal seems to offer the best market for them.

III

The people.—The coast is mainly inhabited by fishermen. But among them a large number seem to be Christians. Small churches have been built for them, one a little to the north-east of the town of Rameswaram, one at Dhanushkoti and another at Thangachimadam. There are also a few Muhammadans in the island, the descendants of old Arab traders. They live by cultivating betel and by following sundry sorts of trade. It is difficult to enumerate the many sects of non-brahmins that live in the

island. Those who are curious to know about them may refer to the "Ramnad District Manual." A few of them are temple servants and artisans in the employ of the Nattukottai Chettiar who has undertaken the repairs of the inner courts of the temple. The bulk of the inhabitants of the town of Rameswaram are Brahmins; and those who depend upon them, all alike live upon the pilgrims and spread their nets as far as Madras, Calcutta and Benares; for, most of the pilgrims come from North India. They have many agents who are shrewd and officious and if the pilgrim can pay will look well to his lodging and convenience and the safe custody of his things. But the pilgrim should provide himself with all possible safeguards. The introduction of the Railway augurs an improvement in the condition of the island and its population.

The *pandas* will when their account is settled give the pilgrim their blessing with yellowed rice grains and cakes of specially prepared sacred-ash (1) bearing their seal.

IV

But those pilgrims who do not like to approach the *pandas* or their agents may resort to the choultries of the Tanjore Rajah or of Venkatarayar or of Rajah of Ramnad which offer healthier and neater accommodation than is at the disposal of these pandas, and then higgle for cheaper rates in the matter of the ceremonies and the baths with the poorer Prohits who act as their own agents. There are, thanks to the development of modern conditions, plenty of coffee-hotels and sweet-meat shops; one near the Railway station, and others in the two

(1) It is said that these are made of ashy earth taken out of Brahmagundam and where Brahma performed a *Yagna* in some past *Yuga*.

important thoroughfares of the town running from the Railway station northward and from the temple westward and crossing each other in the busiest part of the bazaar. The pilgrim is strongly advised to look to his health and make his own arrangements as far as possible for clean and timely meals, and for filtering and boiling his drinking water.(1)

For an account of some of the Chatrams and the names and addresses of the prominent *pandas*, the pilgrim is referred to the appendix.

V

The places worth seeing around Rameswaram are seven in number :—

(*a*) *Mount Gandhamadhana* to the north-west of the town. It is a pretty two-storeyed structure on a sandy elevation at the north-western extremity of the island. There is a ruined palace with fortress near it built by one of the ancient Setupathies—Rajah of Ramnad. The hillock borders a lagoon of the bay, and the rational enquirers will only see in this, the site of an important fortress constructed by some one among the ancient Sethupathies. The real location of the Gandhamadhana range and that particular peak bording the Indian Ocean from which Hanuman made his wonderful leap towards Lanka must remain in obscurity. These might have been anywhere between Rameswaram and Tiruchendur.

(1) Some of the wells in the temple offer good drinking water. Those in the Madhava temple and in the Rameswaram inner shrine are the best. They are in constant use.

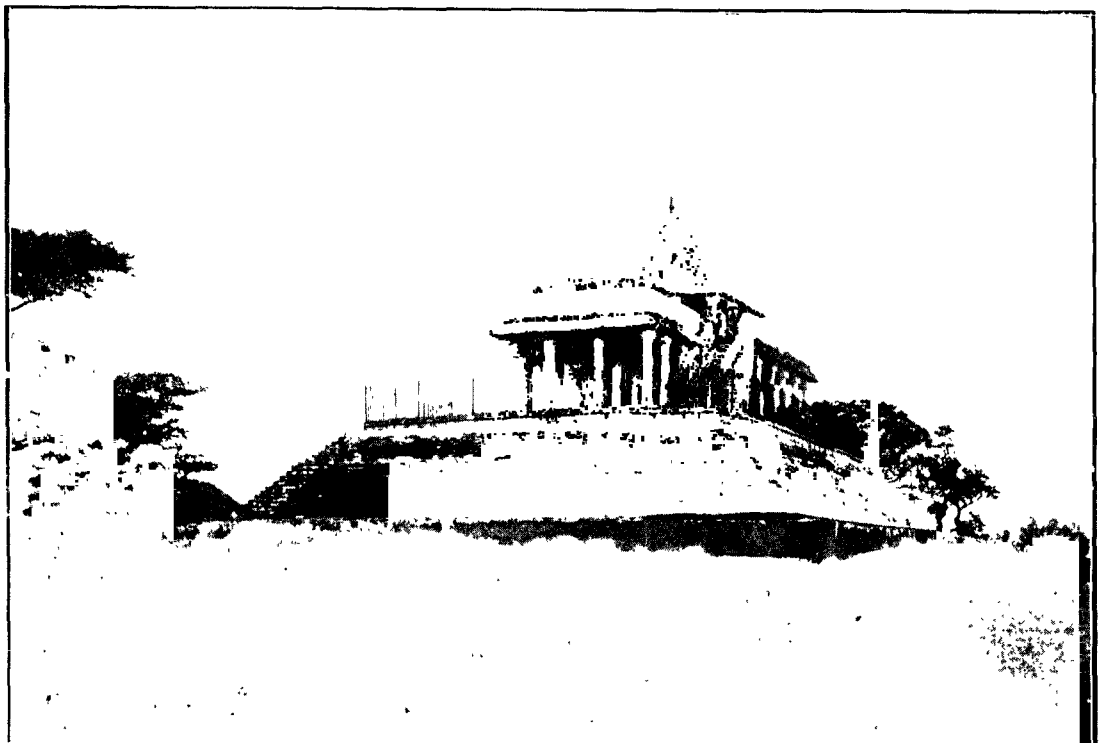

PLATE IX Showing the famous Sacred Mantap over the 'Gandamadhana' hill.

The way to Mount Gandamadhana is lined with a number of small shrines and ponds named after the various generals of Rama's army. Curiously enough, one of them is named after Vaali, though he had been killed by Rama before he set out on his invasion of Lanka. The most important of these little shrines is that of Hanuman very near the hillock. It is in good condition and has a decent well in front of it. A bairagi always resides there and gives *Tulasi* and Bengal gram (boiled and spiced) as the *prasatham* of the God to pilgrims whether they make any gifts or not.

The building on the top of the hillock is a peculiarly constructed two-storeyed Mandapam. In the lower storey the feet of *Sri Rama* are shown on an elevated platform in the centre of the room. After worship is made there, the pilgrim is led upstairs to the partially roofed terrace and is bidden to strain his gaze towards the south and fancy that he sees the fumes from Ravana's eternally burning funeral pyre in the distance. Hanuman is said to have surveyed the ocean and first sighted Lanka from here, and here Rama is said to have arranged his troops for the march on Lanka.

(*b*) *Ekanta-Rameswaram.*—This is a pretty big temple almost in ruins. A dim lamp is still lit there by a Brahmin. The images within are handsome standing figures of Sita, Rama and Lakshmana. Rama is represented with one arm raised as if he were speaking aside to Sita. This is the people's tradition; but the puranic tradition is that Rama held his counsel of war here while the Setu was building, so that the roar of the waves might not disturb him. This temple is mentioned

in the *Ananda Ramayana* alone. In the outer verandah of this temple is the spring called *Amirta Vapee* (the well which confers immortality). The water of it is fresh though not much used.

Within a furlong to the west of this temple along the road are situated four or five important paved fresh water ponds called *Ranavimochana theertha*, *Mangala theertha*, etc. Between Ekanda Rameswaram and the town of Rameswaram, the distance is about four miles and on this road are to be found [1] an old and spacious choultry still somewhat used by bairagis ; [2] another which is used only by the surrounding herdsmen, [3] a small newly built temple dedicated to *Kattupillayar* (the Vigneswara of the forest) and lastly the Lakshmana Gundam and the Rama Gundam. These form the western extremity of the town of Rameswaram.

(*c*) *Nambinayagi Amman.*—Two miles to the south of Rameswaram is a small hamlet protected by sand dunes and *ketaki* hedges and by the Goddess whose name it bears established in a small but neat temple. (The name means the village of the mother who protects the faithful). The Goddess is said to work miracles for the restoration of bodily diseases. A small shed has been erected near the temple for the use of pilgrims.

In its vicinity are located the water works that supply Rameswaram with fresh water. The water of the wells is percolated rain water and is light, clear, sweet and healthy. The village as well as the works are within a mile of the Indian Ocean. The ground

intervening being dotted with innumerable mounds of sand just hardening into sand-stone here and there, and sparsely decked with thorny sea-weed of an otherwise harmless kind. Being protected by the sand dunes the village is free from that anæmic dulness, that results from the constant inhaling of the sea breeze laden with saline humour. Experts will do well to enquire into the causes of the complaint which may be due to the vicinity of large undrained marshes and lagoons of brackish water all round. But the hillocks of sifted sand that border them make the sea very lovely. Bandies go along the rough road to the water works which winds between large hillocks of sand that in one or two places seem to have buried trees and small old shrines. A strange tale is told of an evil spirit haunting the road and defeated by the Goddess of the village in a regular battle. The 'faithful' have not been molested thereafter.

The pilgrims to Rameswaram who happen to stay there for some days and can get a little leisure from the round of religious ceremonies may enjoy the evenings and mornings on these hills of soft, wind-sifted sand greeting the Sun as he rises from his refreshing sea-bath or sinking to apparent rest after his day's toil. Moonlight fills them with a mild glory and the eye hath no end of calm delight as it gazes from the sand to the Moon and from the Moon to the Indian Ocean which is less than a mile from this place. The bay, however, is obscured from this locality by numerous palmyra topes.

(d) *Seetha-Gundam* is the place where Sita or her previous incarnation of *Vedavathi* immolated herself. It is a pool near Thangatchimadam about half a mile towards Rameswaram.

(e) *Villuni-theertham* to the east of Tankatchimadam is a bubbling spring of fresh water in the sea in the vicinity of Tankatchimadam Station. It arose when *Rama* pressed the point of his bow in the sand when *Sita* was hard pressed by thirst.[1]

In addition to its religious interest, the village of Tankatchimadam in this neighbourhood has a thrilling tragic anecdote attached to the choultry founded in it by Vijaya Raghunatha Setupathi (1711-25).

The Setupathi was very pious and used often to go to Rameswaram. "The safety and convenience of the pilgrims was very carefully attended to. To assist the pilgrims, the prince appointed his own son-in-law, to whom he had given in marriage both the daughters born to his senior wife, to the command of Pamban Port with explicit orders that he should assist the pilgrims in their passage over the channel and afterwards in their wearisome march across the sands to Dhanushkoti. Now this son-in-law was himself a reformer, filled with eager desire to make a name for beneficence ; but he was poor. In an evil moment for himself, he devised a plan of levying a trifling boat-fee from all the passengers who passed over from the mainland to Rameswaram and back ; and out of the income arising from this poll tax, he paved the weary eight miles of sandy road between Pamban and Rameswaram with parallel rows of hard stone to the great comfort of all pedestrians and his own eternal memory. But the unauthorized levy of poll tax from the pilgrims greatly enraged the Setupathi who put his son-in-law to death, notwithstanding the entreaties of his two daughters,

(1) This is not very probable, even supposing that Rama made a pilgrimage to the Setu after his coronation according to the Ananda Ramayana.

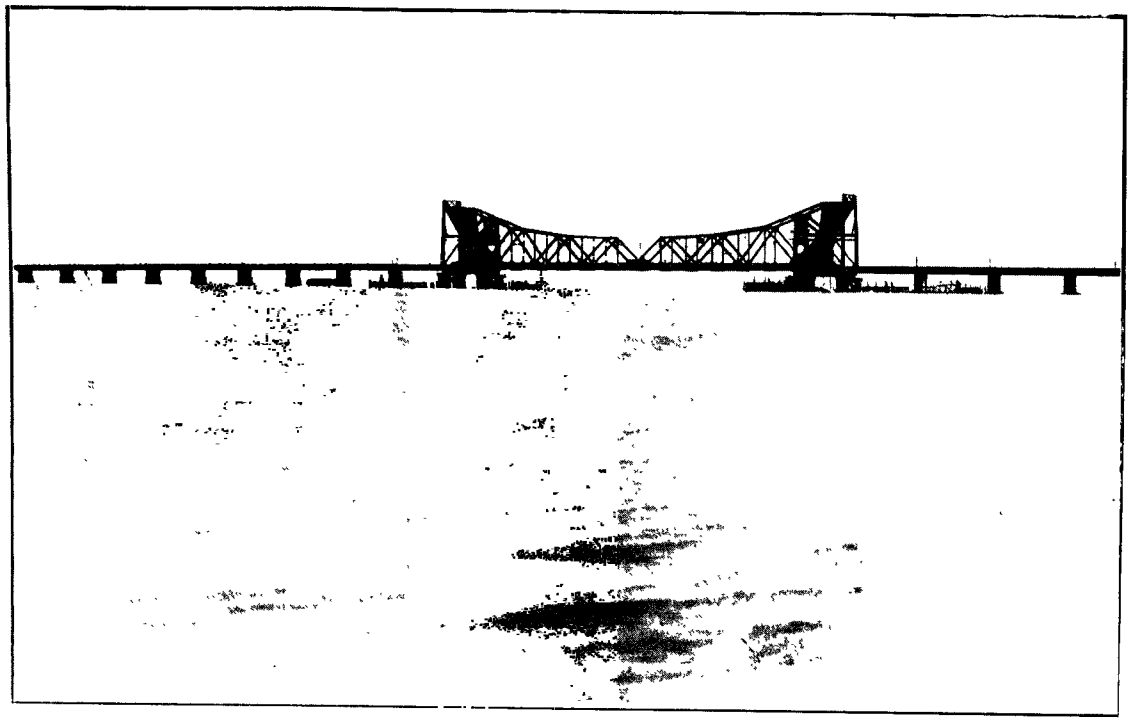

PLATE X.—Showing the closing up of the Scherzer bridge and the Viaduct.

who burned themselves with the dead body of their husband and their memory is still preserved in the twin choultries of Akkalmadam and Tankatchimadam, reared on their ashes, on the road between Pamban and Rameswaram.

(*f*) *Kapi theertham* near Pamban.

(*g*) *Bairava theertham.* Pamban is a sanitarium. The Scherzer rolling lift-bridge is worth visiting. It is said to have cost the company over 18 lakhs of Rupees.

(*h*) *Kodandaraman Koil* a Railway Flag Station about 5 miles from Rameswaram. People from Rameswaram, walk along the shore of the bay to reach it. It is situated in a sandy swamp on the northern shore of the bay and is about half a mile from the Railway line. For fresh water the inhabitants have to go beyond the Railway line and get it from the springs in the sands.

The temple is a small one and is situated on a sandy hillock in the midst of a swamp. Only two or three families including that of the priest live there. Fresh water is supplied to travellers who use the beach between Rameswaram and Dhanushkoti. The temple is built on the ruins of the older one and the terrace offers a very imposing view of the bay and the Ocean. The temple faces the north. The images are all of bronze—Sita, Rama and Lakshmana, the God bearing bows. Vibhishana also is there and the story is that here he sought the protection of Rama and was crowned by him.

The present priest of the temple is a learned and pious gentleman, full of courtesy. The renovation of this

temple was the work of his father ; and his father's strenuous endeavours continued by himself after the former's death have borne fruit in the establishment of the small railway station which is likely to increase the number of visitors and pilgrims.

VI

Advice to the pilgrims :—The roads in the island are rough and the paths are often strewn with the thorns of the babul either by the wind or by heedless fuel-gatherers. It is safe to wear shoes and keep to the beaten tracks. The roads are not at all well cared for even in Rameswaram. Double bullock bandies and a few jutkas and spring-vehicles are available. It is advisable to make previous arrangements when a pilgrim wishes to have such conveniences.

The pilgrim is advised to go to the *Setu* first and then to Rameswaram. If he has time, company, energy, and interest, he can attempt the other innumerable theerthams and minor places of pilgrimage surrounding Rameswaram.

CHAPTER V.

RAMESWARAM

(The Town.)(1)

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O, City of God!"
"PSALM 87"

I

Situation.—Rameswaram is 33 miles to the east of Ramnad and lies between the parallels of latitude 09°17′ 14″ × longitude 79°21′ 28″. The town and the temple are situated in the northern part of the island about a mile to the south east of Mount Gandhamadhana which forms the northern extremity. They are on a bend of the coast which forms a shallow bay full of coral reefs about a mile and a half in breadth. The portion of the bay which is immediately in front of the eastern gate of the temple is called "*Agnitheertham*". Only fishermen and divers with their catamarans (rafts) make use of a large part of this small bay. The Government Chank Store is situated in this section, half a mile to the north-east of this gate of the temple. Chanks are obtained here in large numbers. Between Chank Store and the *Agnitheertham* lies the crematorium. The southern part of the bend is deep enough for open, single-masted coasting boats which ply between Dhanushkoti and Devipatnam. Before the Pamban channel was bridged over, these coasting boats were the sole conveyance for the pilgrims. Even now, though

(1) See Chap. III, pp. 162-167—Ramnad Manual.

they are neither clean nor always safe, the poorer pilgrims prefer these to the train between Rameswaram and Dhanushkoti. They take pilgrims direct to the bathing ghat of *Setu*. Passengers by train have to go three miles along the sands from the Dhanushkoti Railway Station.

II

The name.—The Portuguese knew it as Ramanar Koil, and the Dutch called it Ramespuram. The name *Rameswaram* (1) is due to the God Siva whom Rama is said to have worshipped there before the construction of the bridge.

Atra purvam Mahddevah prasadam akaroth-prabhuh (Here first the Lord Mahadeva showed favour)—(*Valmeeki.*)

The accounts in the *Ananda Ramayana* and the *Siva Purana* show that Rama established the 'Linga' known as Rameswara at the time of the construction of this bridge for the prosperous execution of his plans. These may be said to have expanded the hint in the original epic quoted above. For the full extract translation see the Appendix E. The *Ananda Ramayanam* explains the existence of two *lingams Ramanath* and *Viswanath* by the story of Hanuman's delay in bringing the linga from Benares. *Rama* made a linga of sand and established it at the appointed time. Hanuman grew angry and tried to pull it out but could not. The figure of Hanuman in the small shrine in the portico is intended to illustrate this story. *Rama* appeased him by allowing the new linga to be establised to the left of his own, and even by granting priority of worship to it. The story does

(1) The name Ramanatha also means the patron or protector of Rama. The name Rameswaram beautifully links up Vaishnavism and Saivism; Vaishnavites also visit the temple and worship the God and Goddess.

not agree with the character of Hanuman as depicted in the epic. But this is a small affair when we take the *popular tradition* into consideration that it was Sita that made the Linga of sand in order that the Muhurtha might not be missed. The *Hindu* (12-2-23) published a letter from "A puzzled pilgrim" regarding this, wherein it is pointed out rightly that *Valmeeki* makes *Rama* and *Sita* proceed to *Ayodhya* directly after the fall of *Lanka* without halting at the *Setu*. They halted only at *Kishkinda* and at *Nandigrama*. *Rama* merely pointed out to *Sita* the *Setu* and the place where the *Lord Mahadeva* (Siva) showed favour to him presumably at the time of the construction of the bridge. But the popular account says that *Rama*, having committed the sin of *Brahmahatya* in killing *Ravana*, was advised to establish a Linga at the *Setu* in order to get rid of the sin. Here is the opportunity for introducing *Sita* also into the *pratishta*. Whatever the origin of this temple, the inclusion of Sita's name in its foundation has doubly endeared it to the popular fancy. The stray bits of coral on the sands are cherished by the fair sex as the roots of turmeric used by Sita for painting her face.

The God Siva is here variously called *Ramalinga*, *Rameswara*, and *Ramanathaswami*[1]; the town is also called Devanagaram (city of the Gods).

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(1) The name of 'Ramnad' and the ancient position of the sea and the Setu (see Chapter II) may make one hesitate in fixing the present Rameswaram as the spot where *Rama* actually worshipped *Siva* ere he began the bridge. But like *Setu*, the temple also must have shifted its place with the recession of the sea till it became an architectural fixture at Rameswaram where the Setu must have been situated for long ages.

The extract from the Ananda Ramayana points to Ramnad as the original place of the 'pratishta' of *Ramanatha*. Did Rama first establish Vinayaka at Uppoor and the nine planets at Devipatnam and, Ramanatha Siva at Ramnad, and then begin his bridge at Darbhasayanam? But a little later on, the same purana makes Rama punctiliously retrace his steps and bathe in all the theerthams on the island of Rameswaram as they are at present.

III

Description.—It is about 1½ miles in length and half a mile in breadth and consists of the usual four streets surrounding a temple in South India (with extensions generally parallel to them or at right angles to them) and the gateways of the temple.

The street opposite the East gate is called the *Sannathi Teru* or the street of the Elephants. The *Devasthnam* buildings and offices as well as the *Thiruppani* buildings are situated in the east car street. The co-operative stores is at the eastern end of the north-car street.

The four main streets round the temple are chiefly occupied by Brahmins and the streets parallel to them behind are promiscuously inhabited by the servants of the temple, cultivators and others.

But as the Railway Station is at the south end of the town and the old approach to Rameswaram was from the west, the town largely extends in those directions. Bazaars and chatrams are here and rich purohits have erected some good tiled- and storied- houses for the use of pilgrims. But the older type of low-terraced houses abounds along the road facing the temple west gate. It is said that they are remnants of old Mutts (matams) sold away to private parties.

The two main streets of the town run south and west and cross at a point which is part of the market.

The absence of good drainage makes even the floor of many of the good houses damp and unhealthy. Those which are reserved by purohits for the use of pilgrims are ill-kept, rarely cleaned, no one caring for them beyond

the need of the hour. This seems to be one great source of malaria in the town. The other seems to be the festering bay which at low-water poisons the atmosphere with a pestilential stench of decaying sea-weeds.

The streets round the temple seem to be the healthiest and the main street where the post office lies is also healthy. The Ramnad Rajah's chatram at the threshold of the west tower and Venkata Rao's choultry also situated in the north-west corner of the temple street, are the most decent and well kept of the chatrams. Most of the chatrams for North Indians as well as the large Tanjore Rajah's choultry are situated in the Post Office street. If free water supply could be extended to it, the houses in this street will give better accommodation to the pilgrims than the houses in the crowded streets that the *pandas* place at the disposal of the pilgrims.

The following two sections, give some information regarding the various public institutions, offices, and chatrams in Rameswaram.

IV

Institutions and Offices.

(1) *Railway Station.*—Lies two or three furlongs to the south-west of the town. It has two long tiled-sheds one within and the other without, for sheltering pilgrims from sun and rain. There is also a small water shed adjoining the long, inner, tiled shed on the platform where private charity supplies water and butter-milk to thirsty passengers.

(2) *The Government Hospital* is very near the Railway Station and accommodates in-patients also. It is in the charge of an Assistant Surgeon.

(3) *The Post and Telegraph Office* as well as the Sub-Registrar's Office and Police Station are about half a mile from the chowk and are situated on the long road going west from the west gate of the temple and leading to Ekanta Rameswaram and Pamban. There is a Bench of Magistrates here in this town. For civil purposes Ramnad is the centre.

(4) *The Bazaar* extends along the road leading from the station. But sweet-meat shops are to be found only along the main road near the chowk.

(5) *The Ayurvedic Dispensary* is situated in a small building on the main road about a hundred yards from the west gate of the temple. The dispensary is maintained by the Devasthanam at an annual cost of nearly Rs. 2,000. The present doctor has been trained in the Mylapore Ayurvedic School, but somehow the public are not making a large use of it. It has not sufficiently advertised itself. The Devasthanam which has invested so much money upon it should take steps to ensure its popularity. Lehyams, pills and powders are given ready made.

(6) The *Reading Room* is situated near the Co-operative Stores in the north-eastern corner of the temple. It is located in a house with an open space and garden in front. The chief officials of the town meet here every evening. They get some journals like the 'Modern Review' and the 'Weekly Times of India' and also one daily, *viz.*, The 'Hindu.' These are circulated among the members as soon as they arrive in a certain order agreed upon among themselves. The reading room is open to the public.

(7) *Tiruppani Buildings.*—(Tiru—holy, pani—work). The sacred work of repairs to the temple is going on. The Agent of the Tiruppani people lives in a small but decent house but there is a big storeyed-building always reserved for important visitors. There is another big building which serves as the Agent's Office. The Tiruppanidar has provided a block of small rooms and kitchen, and verandhas, to the north-east corner of the temple in the back-streets for the accommodation of the workmen engaged in the holy repairs.

(8) One of the *Devasthanam* houses is situate at the north-east corner of the temple on the other side of the road and is occupied by the treasurer of the Devasthanam. In another is located the Co-operative Stores. Both of them fetch rent. Yet another building is a big one and is called the *Rama Mantram*. It is within a few yards of the other two on the east road. It consists of two main divisions. The outer half of the compound consists of a big courtyard with old terraced block of rooms and kitchens for the use of pilgrims and two verandahs on one side and a decent tiled block with a suite of large rooms on other side. This tiled block and the bungalow in the inner half of this compound are intended for the accommodation of distinguished guests and pilgrims.

The inner half of the compound contains a bungalow with a small garden and a well in front. The water of the well can be used for cooking and bathing. To the east of the bungalow, there is a backyard in which there is a small temple of Nagalingeswara and Ambika with a paved pond called *Naga Theertham* in front of the shrine. This building has electric fittings and the Devasthanam authorities levy a rent of Rs. 5 per diem.

(9) There is a *mosque* to the south of the Railway Station. The floor space of it, is filled by two long graves lying side by side and resembling the two halves of a huge round pillar cut longitudinally. They are 40 feet in length and are said to be the graves of Cain and Abel. Mohamedan pilgrims visit these in large numbers. Probably early Arab traders brought the tradition with them or they may be graves of two of the earliest of their leaders.

Regarding these graves Major H. A. Newell in his book on Rameswaram writes as follows :—

"At the head of each of the two graves appears an upright tablet of modern dimensions slightly smaller monuments marking the site. These extraordinary graves bear no inscriptions ; in vain the inquirer seeks some answer to the riddle. The white-washed walls remain unresponsive and the faint ghastly light emitted by the lamp swinging from the ceiling but serves to enhance the mystery. A white-clad mullah appears at the doorway. Obediently the visitor removes his shoes and draws nearer to the strangest tombs he ever saw in his life.—The tombs of Cain and Abel.

The local legend runs that, after slaying Abel, Cain was commanded to carry his brother's corpse all round the earth until such time as heaven should vouchsafe him a sign that his penance was ended. Footsore, sick with remorse, and worn out with the weight of this terrible burden, Cain at last reached Rameswaram. Lying to rest in the shade of a palm tree, he was roused by the noise of two crows fighting. The conflict ended by one killing the other, whereupon Cain knew that the promised sign had been given him. Accordingly he proceeded to

dig a grave wherein he buried Abel on the spot where the crow had fallen. Then he too died and was laid beside his brother."

The mosque may also remind one of the invasion of Mallikkafur in the early part of the 14th century which overthrew the Pandya and Chola empires of the south. It might have been intended to perpetuate the memory of this invasion. But the long mysterious graves still remain to be accounted for.

(10) *The Church on a hillock of sand.*—A little to the north-east of the town and about half a mile from it, is situated a small church where the Christian fishermen of the coast largely employed at the chank stores, congregate.

The existence of a church, a mosque and a temple in this holy place testifies to the long peaceful existence side by side of the three important religions of India.

(11) A *Vedic School* is maintained by the Devasthanam and is conducted in the temple precincts near the *Madhava Theertham.* A higher Sanskrit College is established at Madura under the patronage of this Devasthanam, the reason being that Rameswaram cannot attract a sufficient number of pupils and teachers.

V

CHATTRAMS.

(1) *Mahabeer Choultry.*—This seems to have been founded by a Marwari gentleman. But it is popularly named after the Queen Mangammal of Madura whose famous choultries near Madura Railway Station are felt to be such a great convenience by the travelling Indian public. This is also very neat and convenient and is

provided with a few rooms upstairs. The Government Hospital is very near to this on the opposite side of the road. Still this choultry being a little apart from the town, very few pilgrims are using it now. There is a separate accommodation for Brahmins and non-Brahmins. There is a well behind, and a water-tap on the road in front about 30 to 40 yards from the building. There is space for extensions and additions and the accommodation *can be modelled* on that of the chatrams at Madura.

(2) *Ramnad Rajah's Choultry.*—This is situated at the foot of the West Tower. Free accommodation is given to all castes and some twenty or thirty people are fed every night.

(3) *Venkatarayar—Mukundarayar* choultries are very near to the west gate of the temple. They give accommodation and supply cooking vessels. They also feed Brahmins.

(4) *The Tanjore Rajah's choultry* is a spacious building on the main road. It is situated very near the post office. It gives accommodation to all the four castes.

(5) *Marwari Chatrams* : specially intended for North Indian pilgrims are also situate on the main road between the Chowk and the Tanjore Rajah's choultry. There are about four of them and are neat and well-kept. The managers are obliging. Accommodation will not be refused to South Indian Brahmins if they ask for the same. But few resort to them. In all these choultries, a pilgrim will ordinarily be allowed to stay only for three or four days.

(6) *Madams* (Mutts) for Biragis also exist here and there.

(7) A big *choultry* for non-Brahmins is to be found on the road going north from the Chowk, but does not seem to be decently kept. The neighbourhood seems to be very insanitary.

VI

It is highly desirable that healthy, neat and comfortable lodgings for middle class pilgrims should be provided. Choultries on the model of those of Rani Mangammal at Madura are a desideratum. If the town Union, and the Devasthanam join hands, the thing can be realized very soon. The Union Board which derives a large income annually from the pilgrims by way of pilgrim-tax should make this arrangement for their convenience as the outlay will not be unprofitable.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEMPLE

Topography.

"For now have I chosen and sanctified this house that my name may be there for ever, and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."

I

Location.—The great temple of Rameswaram stands on a rising ground in the northern part of the island, the eastern tower which is visible at a great distance, being a stone's throw from the shore of the shallow bay called the *Agnitheertham.* The temple buildings are surrounded by a high wall 12 feet in height covering an area measuring about 865 feet from east to west and 657 feet from north to south. The eastern tower 126 feet in height was finished only about 25 years ago. It surmounts not the wall of the present outer enclosure but that of the inner enclosure surrounding the inner prakaram (usually called the third prakaram). The tower on the west gate is 78 feet high and very much older than the eastern. Both of them are trapezoid in form, and are elaborately covered with mythological figures, the forms of Siva and his consort and his retinue being the most often repeated. "The workmanship is massive and regular and the architecture resembles the Egyptian style."

The two other gopurams surmounting the southern and northern gates are unfinished. They are 19 feet

high composed of single upright stones with others laid across at the top.(1)

II

Entrances :—Outside the main wall on the eastern side are two large porticos, one opposite the eastern gopuram and leading up to it, and the other a little south of it leading into a subsidiary gopuram in a line with the big eastern tower and surmounting the gateway in front of the temple of *Ramanatha's* consort, *Parvadhavardhini*. But this portico is now practically closed, and only opened at the time of the annual marriage festival of the God and Goddess. It leads into the Kalyana Mandapam which is directly in front of the Goddess's temple.

III

Gardens :—Between the outer wall and third prakaram except at the gates there are gardens almost all round the temple which grow various varieties of flower plants watered from wells. Flowers and garlands for the worship in the temple are supplied from these. It would be a most welcome feature of a temple as of a house to have a garden all round interrupted, if at all only by open passages leading to it. The happy atmosphere within contributes not a little to the calmness and the elevation of the mind conducive to worship. The flight of stone steps all round the *Madhava theertham* within the temple affords ample space for artificial gardening with flowerpots. For the sake of symmetry and beauty, the Devasthanam might rear up a small garden along the left-hand

(1) All unfinished towers are locally called Royagopurams. There are many all over South India. One of the Vijayanagar monarchs is said to have ordered the construction of many towers in many places but circumstances prevented their completion. Hence Royagopuram has become a proverbial expression to mean anything unfinished or incomplete.

side of the western wall as it has done along its right-hand side.

IV

Prakarams and Shrines.—An exceedingly interesting and grand feature of this temple is the vast perambulatory corridor 17 feet broad running all round between huge colonnades on platforms 5 feet high. This is called the third prakaram and may be said to enclose all the important shrines, holy wells, and ponds within the temple creating an impression of grandeur and giving a definite unity of design to the whole. Only a pretty big shrine of Nataraja and his spouse is situated in the north-east corner of this prakaram as also two small shrines of Lingams,[1] on the northern and western side which have independent turrets surmounting them. They must have been independent separate temples before they were incorporated into the huge design of the third prakaram. Adjoining this prakaram near the northern gateway is situated the engine power-house which generates the electricity needed for lighting the temple.

In the north-west corner is situate a cell screened from public gaze containing life-size figures painted over, representing the scene of *Rama* and *Sita* establishing the *Linga* called *Rameswara* or *Ramanatha* and *Hanuman* trying to pull off the same with his tail. *Vibhishna* and *Sugreva* and others are standing near. Visitors are charged half-an-anna per head. This exhibition, is a source of revenue to the temple and is auctioned out annually. In the side corridor which connects this with the west gate is a bazaar wherein camphor and saffron and toys and pictures are sold.

(1) They must have been independent separate temples before they were incorporated into the huge design of the third prakaram.

The minor wealth of the sea consisting of varieties of coloured shells and conches is exhibited here. The pictures most in demand are those of *Rameswara*, *The Linga* and its *Pratishta* by *Rama* and *Sita*. Photographs of various parts and aspects of the temple and also of Dhanushkoti Pier as well as costly bracelets made of conch shells and nicely made boxes and baskets of palm-leaf are to be had in these picturesque shops.

The Devasthanam offices are situate in the eastern and south-eastern portions of these prakaras. Near the north-east corner, there is a small strongly-barred cell in which the golden festal images of the God and Goddess costing about Rs. 70,000 are carefully kept ; and worship is offered to them through a small opening at the top. A silver-pair does duty for them at all festal processions. The valuable vahanams as well as the ornaments of the temple are in the custody of the Treasurer of the temple who always resides in Rameswaram unlike the Trustee, who has to tour about the villages constituting the Devasthanam estates, and who is allowed by the Devasthanam Committee to reside in Madura.

Within this prakaram the temple may be said to be divided into two main portions by a huge stone-wall. The *Madhava Theertham* and the temple of *Setu-Madhava* (which has around it a small open compound with some sacred wells and some minor cells and shrines in it) occupy the western section which is about a third of the whole enclosure. The other and bigger section contains the shrines of Rameswara and his Consort. There is a huge doorway connecting the two sections but it is opened only occasionally. Around these shrines runs what is called the second *prakaram* enclosing an area about 386 feet from east to west and 314 feet from north to south.

This is not as complete as the third is, nor is it so imposing, though somewhat older. The temple kitchen (called the *Madappalli*) is situated in the south-east corner of this and provision is made also for those who weave garlands and grind sandal paste for worship.

Between this and the inner prakaram, there is an irregularly pillared and sheltered space which is yet to be reclaimed into decent shape by the munificence of the Tiruppani people in which the great masonry bull Nandhi Maharaj with his brilliant flashing eyes and flaming tongue is couchant. By his side is situated in a barred cage-like cell the Peishkar's office which is practically open at all hours from sun-rise to near midnight. On the south side of this office is the square pond with stone flight of steps called the *Sivatheertham*. Three stone figures in front of the bull deserve notice. The two standing on either side of its face are handsome. They represent Viswanatha and Krishnama Naik of Madura. The third is a short image near a pillar half buried in the ground. It is said to be the figure of a Mahomedan who came to rob the temple. He was struck blind and repented. Then he regained his sight and went away. Pilgrims give a pious knock on the head to this figure.

The inner prakarams are different for the God and the Goddess, the renewal of that for the Goddess having been completed only in 1923. All this is the work of the Tiruppani people. Though some have complained of this as a confusing of styles in architecture and sculpture, yet the pilgrim cannot but be grateful to any structure that adds to the glory and grandeur of such an ancient shrine. In the open space between the second and the inner prakarams to the north side are two long rooms.

They contain a small shrine, that of *Kalabairava* and a large number of lingams of various sizes one of which exhibits 108 lingams.

The inner prakarams are also studded with various small lingams, images and shrines. That of Ramanatha contains (*a*) various small shrines containing fine bronze images of Nataraja; (*b*) another small shrine containing images of Sivaite saints; (*c*) another small shrine of Visalakshi Amman, the spouse of Viswanatha, the linga established by Hanuman; (*d*) a shrine of Vigneswara at the back; and (*e*) a row of 11 lingams adjoining the Visalakshi shrine, one of them is of red-violet stone *Jyothir lingam* and said to have been established by *Vibhishana.* To all of these bath and worship are offered daily. Can these be the twelve lingams (including Ramanatha) spoken of by Prof. Dowson (Dictionary of Hindu Mythology, Trubner's Oriental series) as having been set up by Rama himself at Rameswaram? To Visalakshi Amman, however, worship is offered as many times as in the other three important shrines. *(f)* A holy well called *Kodi Theertham* is by the side of the Visalakshi Shrine.

The high doorway of the Ramanatha Swami inner prakaram is of polished granite; and on either side of it, on the raised platforms immediately within are the images of the Sun and the Moon. It is said that these correspond to the Surya and Chandra *Nadis* of our breath through the right and left nostrils, the God within the shrine corresponding to the soul within the body.

The Mantapam round which this inner prakaram runs has on it *(a)* two smaller mantapams

with beautiful polished pillars of black granite surmount with gilt domes.

(*b*) *Three well-built ancient shrines* the central one containing the Linga of brownish sand-stone established by *Sita* and *Rama*, the one to the left containing a linga of black stone said to have been established by Hanuman, and the third being used for keeping the festal silver-images of the God and Goddess.

(*c*) *A small raised platform* at the south-west corner on which is a barred enclosure containing the image of a Setupathi on horseback facing the east.

(*d*) *A holy well* towards the south-east corner called the *Sarva-theertham* constantly used by pilgrims.

A pair of lingams which receive bath and worship once a day, and which are said to have been the ancient lingams which Rama found there and worshipped before he built the *Sethu*. It was in this form that Mahadeva favoured him.

The porticos (at the east gate).—The portico leading to the tower and gate in front of the Ramanathan Shrine has at its entrance in the right-hand corner a shrine containing a huge crouching figure of Hanuman daubed all over with red paint. The figure is rudely carved out of an irregular huge block of stone and represents him in a painful struggling posture trying to pull down the sacred linga established by Rama. A Brahmin priest of Madhava persuasion conducts worship thrice a day and gives *Tulasi* and theertham to pilgrims. In a niche of

the narrow corridor round this shrine are two lingams said to have been additional ones brought by Hanuman from Benares only one out of the three brought by him being established as Visveswara by Rama's permission close to Rameswara.

On the left-hand side of this portico is a large rectangular well called *Lakshmi theertham*. It is said that the foundations were laid in front of it for Ashta-lakshmi Mandapam by a previous trustee of the temple. This would link up the two porticos namely those in front of Rameswara and of Parvadhavardhini, his spouse. Beyond these two porticos there are houses adjoining the eastern wall of the temple.

Enter the portico of Rameswara and you will find barns and threshing floors on either side of the large pillared passage and also a large roomy cell on the right hand side in which there is a linga called Sethupatheeswarar. Beyond this cell, there are two small shrines on either side of the main gate which contain images of Vigneswara and Kumara. This is a common feature of most of the Saivite temple in South India. In the second prakaram in front of the Nandhi-Mandapam are also to be found a similar pair of small shrines at which worship is offered five times a day. On either side of the western gate also, there is a similar pair of shrines dedicated to the two sons of Siva. These seem to have been repeated as often as new prakarams were added.

Summary.—Now to sum up, the pilgrim will do well to bear in mind.

1. That the third prakaram surrounds all the important shrines in the temple including those of Rameswara, Parvadhavardhini and Setu-Madhava.

2. That the second prakaram surrounds the two great shrines of Rameswara and his spouse on three sides.

3. That the first of the inner prakarams is not a thing common to all or some of the shrines but is different for the different shrines. The only inner one that deserves the name of a prakaram is that which surrounds the inner shrine and the Mandapam of Rameswara and Visveswara.

4. That at any time of the day or the night, it is a pleasure to wander about in the temple which is better lighted and ventilated and cleaner kept than any other big temple in South India.

5. That the west gate is nearer to the heart of the town and that therefore pilgrims usually enter the temple through that; and that it is in the passage leading from this that the small shell-bazaar which sells pictures, beads, saffron and knickknacks is situated.

6. That the temple Peishkar's office is near the Nandi Mantapam in the eastern half of the temple and that the official is accessible at all hours between sun-rise and sun-set.

7. That corresponding to the Nandi-Mantapam between the first and second prakarams of Rameswara there is between the inner and the second prakaram of the Amman Temple a long pillared hall called the *Navasakti Mantapam* with fine sculptured female forms standing in relief on some of the pillars in the middle. Here the Goddess holds her Court on festive nights especially every Friday night before she goes to Ramanatha in a procession.

8. That there is only one entrance which is also the exit to these two inner prakarams, and that this is on the eastern side.

9. Lastly that the European visitor is allowed to enter only the third prakaram. But the lowest classes of Hindus are not allowed even that privilege. A special homam has to be performed in the place polluted by the feet of men of the depressed classes.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEMPLE

Design, Architecture, and Sculpture.

Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble demon watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around.

SHELLEY'S *Alastor*.

I

THE DESIGN: ITS GRADUAL EVOLUTION.

The previous chapter has been devoted to the description of the temple in the hope that it will aid the pilgrim to find his way in the temple, and help him to appreciate its structure which is blamed by Dr. Fergusson as being without any design.

"If it were proposed to select one temple which should exhibit all the beauties of the Dravidian style in their greatest perfection, and at the same time exemplify all its characteristic defects of design, the choice would almost inevitably fall upon that of Rameswaram. In no other temple has the same amount of patient industry been exhibited as here; and in none unfortunately, has that labour been so thrown away for want of a design appropriate to its display."

Before discussing the design, I shall give a description of the architecture. The inner and more ancient shrines

of which there are several, are, it is said "in an early Pandyan style which largely prevails in this part of the country". Local tradition asserts that the Garbhagraha (the best and the oldest portion built of a dark, hard lime-stone to which there is nothing similar in the rest of the buildings) was erected by Vara Raja Sekara of Kandy, with stones cut and polished in Ceylon, and that its cost was defrayed by the sea-port dues of all the coast towns during the year of its building. The massiveness and workmenship of the slabs 40 ft. long which have been used in the doorways and ceilings and the wonderful pillared halls which surround the inner shrine are very noticeable features."

It is ascertained from an inscription at Dumbala in Ceylon that King Parakramabahu in 1173 A.D. built and dedicated a temple to *Nissankeswara* at Rameswaram. Probably this is the origin of the temple where it stands now. The King had succeeded in subduing the Pandya rulers and might have built this temple out of gratitude to the Deity, of whose providential aid he had now "*no doubt*". Tradition seems further to say that, before that age, the Rameswara linga was enshrined in a thatched cottage and looked after by a Sanyasin. The Koditheertham in the north-east of the Rameswaram and Visveswara shrines, seems to have been the first well. Why is it that Visveswara's consort, Visalakshi Amman is established very near him facing the south as in most South Indian shrines, whereas the consort of the principal linga Rameswara is an independent shrine facing the east? This looks like an after-thought and a later addition. The exact sequence of these prathishtas is lost in the mist of ages.

The sarvatheertham is said to have been instituted (near the south-east corner of the Mantapam in front of the Garbhagraha) by Sree Sankaracharya on account of some quarrel with the then authorities of the temple. Brahmins thereafter have been using it in preference to the Koditheertham so much praised in the *puranas*. The *Ananda Ramayana* does not mention it, whereas the *Skanda Purana* mentions it. I conjecture it must have been a creation of the 13th century or even later.

The next stage seems to be the addition of the *Nandi* Mantapam and the *Siva theertham*, a rectangular fresh water pond to the south of it.

The next stage seems to be the addition of the Amman temple with a well in front of it (*Satyamrita Theertha*), and of the second prakaram surrounding both these shrines. The high stone compound wall separating the Madhava theertham and the Setu-Madhava shrines from these older ones seems to indicate that the admission of the latter to an important function in the *Setu-Yatra* is a much later affair. The *Ananda Ramayana* calls him *Sveta Madhava* and that is justified by the smooth, white coral stone out of which the handsome image has been worked. It is provided however with silver eyes and nose and thilakam which are daily stuck on by means of sandal paste after the bath.

The *Sveta Madhava* must have been converted into *Setu Madhava* by the influence of association and the similarity of the sounds. This temple of Vishnu seems to me to be a Vaishnavite rival of the great Saivite shrine. It also faces the east in its own compound. It is independent and is provided with a number of good fresh water

springs, north of the compound and a large fresh water tank to the south having flights of stone-steps all round.

The grand idea of unifying the great *Siva* and *Vishnu* shrines architecturally, seems to have occurred to Udaiyan Setupathy, and to a Komati of Nagoor near Negapatam about 1434. The Western tower and the outer compound-wall are said to be their work. If Kiran Rayar of Deccan is to be credited with the unfinished Gopurams at the north and south gates, this design must have been already formed by him. It was reserved for the above said prince and merchant to complete it. I venture to think that the definite connection of this "White Vishnu" with the *Setu Yatra* might have sprung up about the time when this grand idea of architectural unification of these temples was conceived. The *Ananda Ramayana* which speaks of almost all the present small theerthams only calls him "*Sveta Madhava*". The *Skanda Purana* connects him with the dream of a Pandyan King called Punyanidhi.

The popular notion is that *Setu Madhava* was daily bringing pots of water swung on a pole from the Ganges for bathing the *Ramanatha linga* but consented to be chained to the spot for the sake of pilgrims to crown their yatra.

The king was very pious and went to the *Setu* and performed Yagnam there in honour of *Vishnu*. Then he bathed at Dhanushkoti and saw a beautiful girl roaming all alone on the sands. She said she had no relatives and begged protection. The king had an only son and was glad to have also a daughter thus providentially vouchsafed to him. He and his wife Vindhyavali were very fond of her and satisfied every wish of hers.

One day a Brahmin sage appeared at the palace and seeing the princess, caught her by the hand for he was struck with love. She cried aloud and the king ran up to the spot. To appease her the king put the Brahmin in chains and confined him in the vicinity of *Ramanatha* (Siva). In the night the king had a dream wherein the Brahmin and his own daughter appeared as *Vishnu and Lakshmi* respectively. On waking up, he found the two still in those dream shapes, and begged their pardon. They were pleased with his devotion and promised blessings. Vishnu said further that all the Gods would dwell in the *Setu* and himself would continue to appear in that fettered form in that place and give salvation to pious bathers in the *Setu*. This is the way in which the association of *Vishnu* also with the *Setu-Yatra* grew up. The *Madhava* temple is seen from this story to have come into existence long after the *Siva* temple.

Here is an extract from Dr. Burgess's article in the Indian Antiquary (1883) on the ritual of Rameswaram which gives all that is known about the history of the temple :—

"The principal shrines are said to have been built by Udaiyan Setupathi with the aid of a Ceylon Prince styled Pararaja Sekhara 1414 A.D. (Saka 1336) the latter having had the stones hewn at Trinkomalee and numbered on the spot, ready to be put together. This is said to be supported by the architectural style of these buildings themselves and by inscriptions on the base of the chief shrine. The north and south gopurams are unfinished and ascribed to one Kirina Rayar of the Deccan about 1420 A. D.

The western gopuram, like the others, built entirely of hewn stone, and the outer surrounding walls are said to

be the works of Udaiyan Setupathi, and a Komiti Chettiyar of Nagoor near Negapatam in 1434 A. D., and statues of the merchant and his wife surmount the eastern wall. In 1450, additions were made to the inner building by a wealthy Hindu from Madura, and others ; in 1568 A. D. (Saka 1490) by Chinna Udaiyan Setupathi Katta Tever then a feudatory of Viswanatha Nayakkar of Madura, whose statue and that of his son Krishnappa were set up in front of the Nandi. An inscription relating to this by the side of the doors into the first prakaram in front of these, was destroyed, with others, some twenty years ago or more, during a suit between the Pandaram of the temple and the Zamindar of Ramnad.

The southern half of the second prakar was erected, it is said, about 1540, by Tirumalai Setupathi, whose statue and that of his son Regunatha stand by the side of the south entrance into the Amman Temple, and are honoured with garlands and on offering of betel-nut and flowers every Friday night when the image of the Swami is brought to this place on its way to the bedchamber (Palli-arai) in the Amman temple. Regunathan Triumalai Setupathi, just named, built the rest of the second prakaram about 1658 A. D. (Saka 1580).

The great unfinished eastern gopuram is ascribed to Dalavai Setupathi in 1649 A. D. (Saka 1571) who also built the Sabapathi (Nataraja) shrine in the north-east corner of the 3rd prakara in 1702 A. D. (Saga 1624). About 1740 A. D. (Saka 1662) the Setupathi began the third prakaram setting up the entrances into it from the gopurams on all four sides, and it was completed by Muthu Ramalinga Setupathi (Saka 1647-91) *i.e.*, (1725-6 A. D. to about 1770 A. D.) The statues of the latter and of his two manthries-Muthu Irulappa Pillai son of Sundara

Pandyan Pillai and Krishna Iyengar are conspicuous in the entrance corridor.

The temple, therefore, is *not the work of one age* but extends over a period of 350 years and has been erected and endowed almost exclusively by one family, the Setupathis (Chiefs of Ramnad). It is one of the last great works of the Hindus, and the latest addition to it is the finest of all."

The above extract assigns the chief shrines enveloping wall and the four gopurams to the 15th century, the second prakaram to the 17th century and the third prakaram with its grand aisles and colonnades to about middle of the 18th century.

The *Ramanatha* and *Amman* shrines form as it were, a separate temple by themselves. There is a huge west gate to this with its own armed guardians seated on stone elephants. This is now under construction by the Tiruppani people. But formerly it must have been the gate through which during the spring festival the God and Goddess came out to spend a week at the *Madhava theertham* which may also have originally signified "The Spring Pool."

On page 202 of the *Ramnad Manual* it is stated on the authority of Dr. Burgess that the second prakara was begun in 1500-01 A. D. (Saka 1422) by Chinniya Udaiyar Setupathi. His son also was a Regunatha Thirumalai and was alive 1540 A. D. This would throw back the construction of the second prakara into the early part of the 16th century instead of the 17th as stated in the above extract from Fergusson.

It is unintelligible how this rather clumsy design of this imperfect second prakara could have been conceived

by anybody after the grand construction of the huge compound wall and of the four towers though only one of them had been finished. It is possible that the Sethupathis referred to only renewed or repaired this part of the temple which contained all the important shrines surrounding *Ramanatha*. This must have been in existence since the time of the first builder Udaiyan Setupathi. The architect's ambition seems to have been satisfied at that time with closely uniting the shrines of the god and the goddess. The huge masonry *Nandi* might have been added by Krishnama Naik of Madura at the time of his invasion of Ceylon in the 16th century.

The Palli-arai (Bed-room) in the Amman temple with its silver swing and couch and other fittings was the work of Vijaya Raghunatha Setupathi 1711-25 A.D.

The Nataraja shrine in the north-east corner of the third prakara is ascribed by Furgusson to Dalavai Sethupathi in 1702 A. D. But at that date neither he nor his son Regunatha Tirumalai was living (Saka 1624).

The idea of the third prakaram might have been taken from the temple at Srirangam, and it might have been put into the head of the pious prince Muthukumara Vijaya Ragunatha by his minister Krishna Iyengar who ontinued to serve under his successors and laboured for the completion of the gigantic structure.

It may be on account of its being a gradual growth that the temple fails to impress one with any unity of design. But the construction of the third prakaram has imposed a sort of close relationship and connected meaning upon a multitude of shrines, and images which would otherwise have been a veritable distraction to the pilgrim. Even as it is, the temple is studded with

innumerable *lingams* which according to one version are the *pratishtas* of the various followers of Rama. The Pratishta of a *lingam* or of a *Naga* is said to remove sin and the example is catching. A few of the important and well-endowed *pratishtas* continued to be remembered and worshipped, whereas the others fell into neglect. Rameswaram is full of such neglected nagas and lingams.

II

Architecture.

The architecture is in the pure Dravidian style, massive and strong. The pillars are huge upright stones with gradual carved projections towards the top to furnish adequate support to long stone slabs raised horizontally above them. The grandest specimens of this style are to be found in the Madura Temple. The pillars are richly carved. The most favourite carving is into hunters and warriors riding on horses or elephants. Very frequent are figures representing elephants lifting up their trunks which are caught between the paws and the fangs of supposed rampant lions. Such are found in Madura, Tinnevelly and Trivandrum. The pillars are decorated with fine fretted work or with mythological figures. The temples at Chidambaram and a few temples in Kumbakonam are remarkable for this elaborate and exquisite ornamentation of the pillars and it has been introduced into the repairs and additions made to the huge temple at Jambukeswaram near Trichinopoly.

In the Rameswaram temple these elaborate carvings have been white-washed or painted over, probably to protect the stone from the corroding action of the salt breeze. The Tirupani workers are using granite stones

PLATE XI —Showing the inner view of the Rameswaram Temple Corridor—The famous in India.

brought from Ambasamudram quarries in the Tinnevelly District and seem to think that such coating is needless. Stone, brick, coral stone seem to have been employed in the older parts of the structure.

Another noteworthy feature of the South Indian temple architecture is the absence of the arch. The gate ways are made of long upright stone slabs with single stone slabs laid upon them. The gates vary from 12 to 19 feet in height.

The pillars in the corridors are composite and elaborate in design. The pillared platform lining the aisles on either side are a special feature of this temple. The west corridor is by far the finest of the whole lot having double rows of monolithic pillars highly carved. The total length of all the corridors is 4,000 ft. a unique feature. I quote the following from the *Ramnad Manual*, page 165 :—

"The corridors are the most celebrated feature of the temple. These extend to nearly 4,000 ft. in length and from 20 to 38 ft. in breadth and are from the floor to the centre of the roof about 30 ft. in height. Each pillar is composite and highly elaborate in design. The impression produced by such a display of labour when extended to an immense length is unique. None of the European cathedrals are more than 500 ft. and even the nave of St. Peter's is only 600 ft. from the door to the apex.

Here the side corridors are 700 ft. long and open into transverse galleries as rich in detail as themselves. These with the varied modes of lighting,[1] produced an

(1) There is electric lighting now. It was introduced in 1922. But the old kinds of illumination still continue in the inner shrines and prakarams as also near the gate to the Nandhi Mandapam in the second prakaram.

effect that is not equalled certainly anywhere else in India. Unfortunately the whole has been so extensively white washed and painted that the general effect is altered, and much of the intrinsic sharpness of details is destroyed. The art displayed is perhaps not so good as in some other temples. Much of the effect produced on the mind of the observer is due to the immensity of the labour employed combined with a certain picturesqueness and mystery." The terrace above is rendered rain-proof by being thickly plastered over with well-prepared mortar evidently stronger and more lasting than cement. Usually small oblong openings are left here and there in the roof in order to let in the light. Rameswaram temple does not seem to have this provision except in the second prakara. Even here, it is not so dark as in other big temples during the day, and all through the night there is the electric illumination which the previous trustee Mr. V. Venkata Subbier, B.A., has provided for the convenience of temple servants and pilgrims as well as for the safety of the temple properties.

With regard to the flooring, it is all of stone. The third prakaram is used by carts also that happen to have business in the temple. Hence the flooring is spoiled in places. This is now being renewed by the Devasthanam beginning from the East corridor. The inner prakarams of both the Rameswara and Parvadhavardhani shrines have been renewed by the Tirupanni people and the flooring is very decent and neat.

III

SCULPTURE.

The sculpture of this temple is not so remarkable as that of the Madura temple, either in fineness of design or in neatness of execution, except in a very few cases.

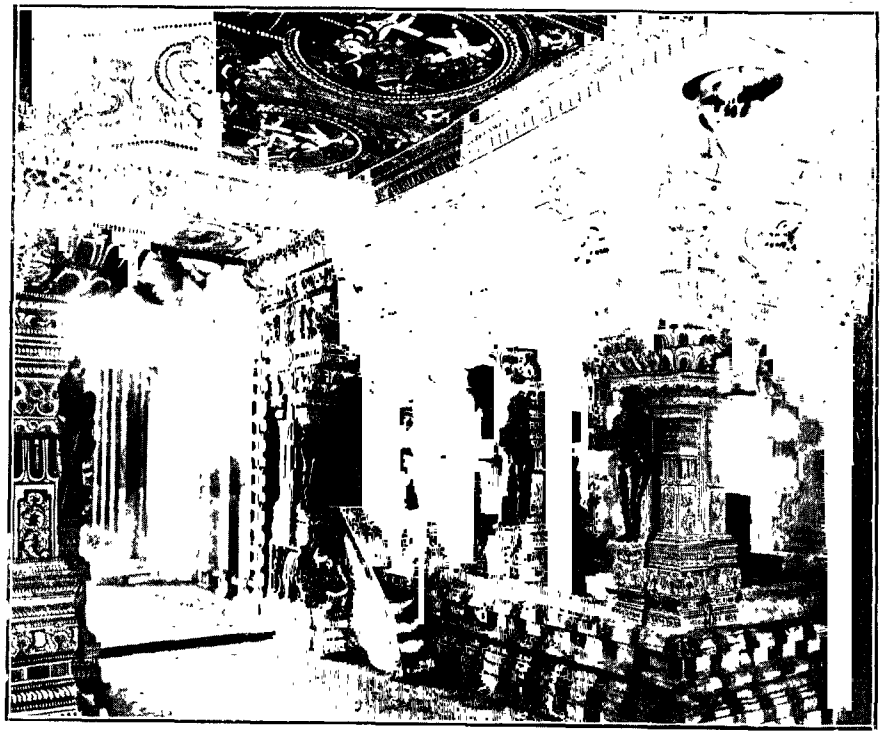

PLATE XII.—Showing the main eastern entrance of the "Rameswar Temple" and a portion of the aisle.

The two chief goddesses as well as the figures of the Navasaktis in front of the *Amman* exhibit symmetry of form and delicacy of features. Almost all the figures are constantly smeared with oil in order to give a glossy appearance and probably also to protect the stone from the action of the atmosphere and of the water of the abishakams.

The statues of the Setupathies and their ministers line the corridor at the Eastern gate, before the shrine of Nataraja (Sabapathi) in the north-east corner of the third prakaram and also before the entrance to the second prakaram of the Amman temple. Some are also to be seen in the Kalyana Mantapam adjoining the portico in front of the Amman temple. These are all well painted and exhibit an almost life-like appearance. They can compete with the statues of the Naik kings and their ministers in the Pudumantapam opposite the Madura temple. One common realistic feature of all of them is the fat paunch.[1] The finest of all the statues and images is that of Setu-Madhava in white coral stone but the nose and eyes of it are of silver and are daily taken out and replaced after bath.

One note-worthy feature in the sculpture of this temple is the comparative dwarfish stature of the figures of the gate-keepers deposited over elephants in many places for example in the third prakaram at the eastern as well as the western gates, and also at the Vasantha gate near the Madhava tank. This last one has recently been demolished by the Tirupanni people.

(1) All the Sethupathies are of the Marva tribe and many of their ministers and generals of old were also of the same tribe. The fat paunch, in addition to being a peculiar family feature, may be due to the extreme comfort and ease of aristocratic life.

Another curious feature is the inner repetition of the outer gate wards superimposed on elephants. I have noticed this feature in the Madura temple also. The meaning of it is not clear. Fashion is a tyrant.[1] Further, these figures are represented with a curved tooth projecting from either side of the mouth. The huge figure of Garudha Alwar in Sri Rangam temple also has this feature. So, it cannot be regarded as peculiar to the figures of demons or giants. It cannot be peculiar to divinity for the figures of the chief Gods and Goddesses do not exhibit it. I am unable to get any explanation of the puranic or other basis for such a representation.

In South Indian sculpture generally, there is a tendency to exaggerate certain features especially the bosom in female figures but at the same time, we must give credit to the sculptures for avoiding absolute nudity by the trailing of ornamental wreaths or garlands where the design did not include a robe. In this connection, I would like to point out that this exaggeration is avoided in the best productions of South Indian Sculptural art of which the figures of Meenakshi in Madura, Kanyakumari at the Cape and Mangalambikai in Kumbakonum are some. These are highly finished specimens and should receive all the greater praise for the intractable material out of which they are hewn. The marriage group on one of the pillars in Sundareswara Sannidhi and the smiling figure of the six faced God riding on a peacock at the back of the Sundareswara Shrine in the Madura temple are also master-pieces.

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(1) Consider also the Vimana, form of the Nataraja shrine in the Nageswara temple, and of the inner shrine of the Sarangapani temple in Kumbakonum. The first has a legend to support it. Which was the original and which was the limitation? It is difficult to decide.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEMPLE

Management and Worship.

Into the inmost temple then I came
Which fuming all with frank incense I found;
And odours rising from the altar's flame
Upon an hundred marble pillars round.
The roof up high was reared from the ground.

"THE FAERIE QUEEN IV. x"

"*Oh the sacrifice*".
How ceremonious, solemn and unearthly.
It was i' the offering.

THE WINTER'S TALE III.

I

THE MANAGEMENT.

The Devasthanam is at present managed by a Trustee controlled by a committee of five members. The membership of this is limited to five years except in the case of two members whose offices are hereditary—one is in the male line of the present Setupathi Raja of Ramnad and the other is in the male line of the late A. L. A. R. Ramasamy Chettiar, Zamindar of Devakota

But for centuries the institution seems to have been managed by a succession of Pandarams. There were frequent disputes (about 1860 A. D.) between them and the Setupathies with regard to the management of the

temple, in the course of which the Pandarams seem to have destroyed many valuable inscriptions and copper-plates belonging to the temple. "The line became extinct ; the District Judge of Madura then undertook the management through a Receiver appointed by the Court This continued for some years. Then the District Court appointed managers under the provisions of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act. The late Thirugnana Sambanda Pandara Sannadhi Avergal of Madura, the late lamented Rajah M. Bhaskara Setupathi Avergal (grandfather of the present Rajah of Ramnad, and the Zamindar of Devakota) were successively appointed managers by the District Court. Finally in 1911 a scheme of management was decreed by the Sub-Court of Ramnad in a suit instituted by the Hon. The Advocate-General of Madras."

Brief notes Traditional and Historical relating to the Rameswaram Temple, 1914.—The Trustee is permitted to reside in Madura as that happens to be a convenient centre for touring through the villages belonging to the Devastanam. He has to spend about four days every month in Rameswaram however. He is assisted by a Treasurer who resides in Rameswaram, and a Peshkar who is solely concerned with the internal management of the temple-worship and establishment. The Peshkar is provided with an assistant and some clerks. The Treasury (Karuvelam) is situated in the second prakaram at the north-east corner and is always guarded by the Police. The Treasurer's office however is in the third prakaram on the eastern side not far from the entrance to the Ramanatha Sannadhi. The Peshkar's office is in the Nandi Mantapam by the side of a stone-paved rectangular pond called The Siva Theertham.

Pilgrims are advised to seek the Treasurer's advice [1] regarding the worship in the temple.

Now there is also another officer an overseer near the north gate of the temple to look after the electric installation.

II

INCOME.

"The income of the temple is derived mostly from the endowed villages, kattalais, and contributions, the offerings of the pilgrims and devotees, and receipts from the sale of tickets for the various divine services."

The income from the pilgrims amounts to a lakh and a half of Rupees annually, and from all the endowments it amounts to as much more. There is at present a saving of about 4 lakhs owing to the careful management of recent years. The electric installation cost about Rs. 50,000 and will cost nearly Rs. 5,000 per annum for its efficient upkeep.

"The Devastanam has about 76 inam villages dispersed in the Ramnad, Tanjore, Madura, and Tinnevelly Districts granted by the former Rajahs of Ramnad, and other persons, the grants having been subsequently recognised and confirmed by the generous British Government. Besides these villages there are topes and other property in Rameswaram, Pamban, Jaffna and elsewhere."

"There are also contributions and kattalais by their Highnesses the Maharaja of Travancore and the Rajah of Pudokotah and by His Excellency the Prime Minister and

(1) A printed sheet in English and Hindi detailing the modes of worship and the charges for the same can be had in the Treasurer's office. (See Appendix.)

Marshal of Nepal and the immortal Pachayaippa of Madras and various other persons."

This and the previous quotations in this section are from the brief notes prepared by the then (1914) Trustee for the Governor's Visit. (For details See Appendix).

III

FESTIVALS.

The three chief festivals of the temple fall in the months of Ani (Jeyashta) (June), Adi (Ashada) (July) and Masi (Magha) (February). These attract huge crowds of pligrims. But there is also a spring festival (Vasanthothsvam) in the month of Vaikasi (Vaisakha) (May) when the god and goddess enjoy the breeze on the north bank of the Madava theertham. Every Friday night, the goddess holds courts in the *Navasakti Mantapam* which is also called on this account the Sukravara Mantapam. After the regular worship is over, a herald with silver-rod, a master of ceremonies, appears and calls for recitations from the four Vedas, from the Tamil Thevarams, Tiruvasagam, Tirupallandu and for a variety of musical display on different kinds of musical instruments. Only after all these offerings of music and verse is *vibhuti* distributed, to the Brahmins first and to all others afterwards. The disregard of the Tamil Vedas insolently attempted by some so-called "Aryas" has never found favour here. She then proceeds as usual to Ramanatha and goes thrice round the shrine to the chant of Vedic hymns, in the gold palanquin and then goes in procession all round the third prakaram. In this prakaram, when the procession reaches the statues of the Sethupathis, just in front of the Amman Sannadhi, the master of ceremonies, the man with the silver-rod known as ***Kattiyam*** invokes the benediction of Ganesha, Kumara,

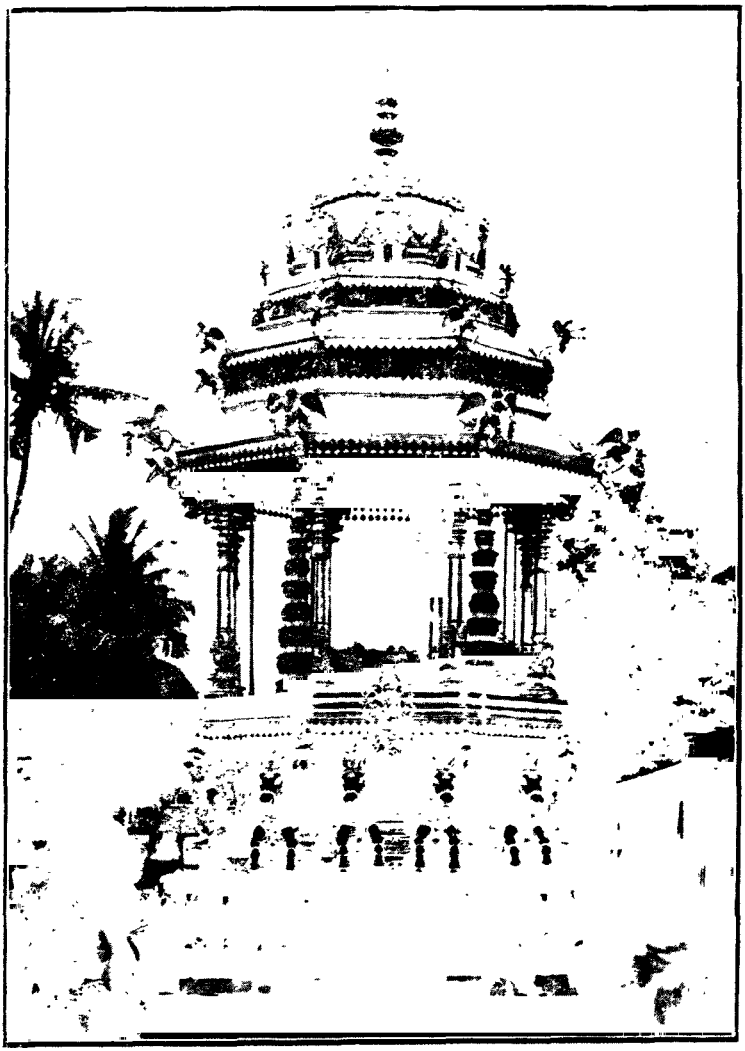

PLATE XIII —Showing the famous 'Silver Car' with its embroidered decorations

Brahma, Durga, Luxmi, Sarasvathi and other Gods and Goddesses down to Chandesvari. Then camphor is offered and the procession goes forward. The palanquin is stopped a second time and the Raghunatha Sethupathi who instituted the Friday festival is specially honoured. A silk cloth is tied round the head of his statue, garlands and *pansupari* are offered. The musicians and the Temple women, go thrice round the gold palanquin. The master of ceremonies requests the Gods and Goddesses to go back to their own places. There is an elaborate dheepam or offering of lights called *alangara dhipam* and with the offering of camphor, the Goddess is taken into the second prakaram.

The procession consists of a horse and an elephant and camels, a band of drummers and musicians and vestal dancers followed by the officials of the temple. Large numbers of pilgrims and visitors crowd along the corridor and vestibules.

The priests go in advance and offer worship in certain places on the route and after a brief dance, the music of the pipers is resumed and the procession slowly threads its way along lofty antique aisles. On almost all such occasions, garlands taken from the images are offered to the highest Devastanam officials present on the spot and sometimes also to distinguished visitors.

As the procession returns to the gate of the Amman temple, a silver Vinayaka mounted on a huge silver mouse greets his mother, receives her blessing and retires. Then the procession enters the Amman Sannadhi. The bed-chamber (*Palli-arai*) is opened, and the divine pair are carried to their swinging gold couch. The usual worship with vedic hymns, Tamil songs, *Neeranjanam*

and *Naivethiam* is offered; and when the milk and the *sundal* (sauced Bengal gram) which form part of the offering, are distributed among the visitors present, the principal temple brahmin official there present, swings the couch and the doors are shut for the night. (See Appendix.)

The dance and the long procession and the Goddess's Durbar distinguish the Friday night from the other nights of the week.

IV

THE WORSHIP.

The puja or ritual of this temple deserves notice as it is peculiar in some details, and differs from what is the practice in temples north of the *Tungabadra* and the *Krishna* (Dr. Burgess).

The puja is of two kinds, *viz.*: *(a)* that which is offered by the priests of the temple regularly six times a day, and *(b)* that which is offered to the god on behalf of the pilgrims as they come one after another with their various sorts of tickets. (See Appendix A.)

The former takes place six times a day *(a)* between 4 and 5 a.m. *(Thiruvanandal Puja)* Abishekam with milk to a crystal *Linga* kept in the Rameswaram *Garbhagriham*, *(b)* after sunrise *(Udayamarthanda Puja)*, *(c)* after the first Jamam *(Udaya Kalam or Kalasandhi Puja)* about 9 a.m., *(d)* at Mid-day between 12 Noon and 1 p.m. *(Uchikala Puja)*. Interval: till about 3 or 4 p.m., *(e)* at sunset *(Sayaraksha Puja)*, *(f)* after 9 p.m. preparatory to the retirement for the night *(Arthajama Puja)*.

In the early morning at 5 a.m. the *Padasaiva* or *ochan* blows the conch in front of the Hanuman, thrice and strikes a gong. This is repeated at all the other entrances also. Then come the musicians and play in front of the temple. Then the doors are opened by responsible servants of the temple. The worship starts with a bath with milk to the *Spadika* (*Crystal*) *Linga* kept in the Rameswara *Garbhagriha.* After this the silver image of the god is brought back from the bed chamber with due ceremony in a palanquin to the accompaniment of drum and pipe with vedic hymns and Thevarams, etc., and placed in the usual place in the *Garbhagriha.*

Gilded images of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Vibhishana can be seen in their respective small chambers made of black granite within the Maha Mantapam.

The routine of worship consists of the following details :—

(*a*) Abisheka with 16 materials in the following order :—

(1) Scented oil, (2) Lime juice, (3) Flour of green pulse, (4) Turmeric powder, (5) Wet cloth, (6) Panja-Gavya, (7) Milk, (8) Curd, (9) Ghee, (10) *Panchamirtham*, (11) Fruit-juice, (12) Honey, (13) Juice of sugar-cane, (14) Water of a tender cocoanut, (15) Fragrant water, (16) Pure water. After every one of these first 15 baths, pure water is enjoined before the next is begun.

(*b*) With holy charmed water *punyahavachanam* is performed and the holy water sprinkled on every part of the inner shrine.

(*c*) Elaborate charming and purification of the water is made by special priests of the Mantapam with hymns (*Mahanyasa japam*) for the performance of the mid-day *Abhishekam*.

(*d*) The usual offering of Dhupa, Dheepa, Naivethiam, Thambula and Niranjana familiar to every Hindu household. In the temple worship, however, there seem to be some variations in the order; Dupha comes first; Naivethia, Thambula, Dheepa and Niranjana follow in order.

V

The Deepas.

The Deepa offering is peculiar. There are seven kinds of it:—(1) *Ekamuka deepa*, (2) *Sapthasthana deepa* also called (Alangara dheepa) to be waved with both hands, (3) *Panchaseersha Naga dheepa*, (4) *Rishabha dheepa*, (5) *Purusha-mriga dheepa*, (6) *Nakshatra dheepa*, (7) *Kumba dheepa*.

The names of these dheepas are derived from the shapes of the metalic stands. "Each dheepa is waved from above downwards, then thrice round going upon the left and down on the right, and lastly swinging it straight downwards. Before receiving each dheepa from his assistant, the priest washes his hands and throws a flower or a *bhilva* leaf on the dheepam. After offering *pan-supari* the dheepam is waved once more and then the *Niranjanam* (or *Ararthrikam*) is given with lighted camphor. This is then taken to all the visitors and

sacred ash is given to each, *Kunkuma* if in the Amman's temple." (1)

"First the incense is to be offered; then the priest presents the *Naivethia* (sacred food) then after presenting betel leaf, the light must be presented; then the *Maha dheepa, the Bhuta-Rudra dheepa, the Naga dheepa, the Shesha dheepa, the Purusha Mriga dheepa,* and *the Nakshatra dheepa* which is arranged in three rows of five, three and one respectively, all these dheepas each with its worship must be waved before the God. Then the *Dig-bandha* and the *Avakuntana* ceremony with sandal powder and incense must be performed. The *Pancha-muddra* and *Dhenu-muddra* must be presented. The waving of *Arati* with the five Brahmanas and the six Angas should be performed; then the waving of

(1) धूप दद्यात् प्रथमतो नैवेद्यं दापयेद्गुरु ।
तांबूलं तु निवेद्याथ पुनर्दीपं तु दर्शयेत् ॥
महादीपं ततः पश्चात् भूतरुद्रादिसंज्ञिकम् ।
नागदीपं शेषदीपं पुरुषामृगसंज्ञिकम् ॥
नक्षत्रसंज्ञिकं दीपं पंचत्रीण्येक वक्त्रकम् ।
आरात्रिकं च सर्वत्र समारोप्य समर्चयेत् ॥
गन्धपुष्पैः धूपयुक्तं दिग्बन्धं चावकुण्ठनम् ।
पंचमुद्र समायुक्तं धेनमुद्रं प्रदर्शयेत् ॥
पंचब्रह्म षडंगैश्च पश्चादारात्रिकां नयेत् ।
नीरांजयेत्तु तत्काले घण्टा शब्द विवर्जितम् ॥
नीरांजनं ततो दत्वा मध्ये चाचमनीयकम् ।
भस्मानि दर्शयेत्पश्चात् भ्रूमध्ये तिलकुंकुमम् ॥
धूपं दद्या त्प्रथम तो नैवेद्यं दापयेद्गुरुः ।
तांबूलं तु निवेद्याथ पुनर्दीपं तु दर्शयेत् ॥

camphor must take place when the sound of the bell is stopped. After the *Niranjana, Achamaniya* must be offered. Then the sacred ash must be shown. Then the sparkling mark of tila (kunkuma) must be placed between the eye-brow.

Then the bhattar (priest) pours water on the floor saying *Achamaniyam* and with ashes kept near the door-jamb, he puts a thilaka on the Linga. A sthanikar (assistant) next gives him a looking glass which he shows to it; a small umbrella which he holds over it for a little; a *chamara* which he whisks twice or thrice and a fan of peacock feathers which he waves for two or three minutes. Then he takes flowers and Bhilva leaves and presenting them to the Linga with joined hands, he begs pardon for any faults in the ritual. Then he performs Archana while one Sadhakachariar from the Arthamantapam (the Ante-chamber) repeats 108 names of the Lord Siva.[1] Naivedhiam and Niranjanam are repeated and only ashes given to the attendant visitors and then the priest proceeds to visit almost every *linga* in the inner and outer prakaram with bell, dheepa, dupa and Naivedhiam.

He next commences the *archana.* Facing the north and holding in his hands a tray full of bhilva leaves, the Bhattar stands in the shrine, while the Adhyayanabhattar standing in the Ardhamantapa says :—

Sivaya Namaha, Sankaraya Namaha, Mahadevaya namaha, Sambhava namaha, Pasupataye namaha, Isvaraya namaha, Chandra-Sekhara namaha, Khanda-parasave namaha, etc., up to 108 or on special occasions up to 1008 designations.

(1) It is an important feature of the worship here that the man who conducts the worship is not allowed to open his mouth lest any spray of spittle should fall on the God or Goddess. The mantras or names have to be repeated from the anti-chamber by another person.

A Sthanikar now brings back the food from the *Arai* or pantry, and the Bhattar sprinkles it with water and waves his hand from it towards the linga saying :—

Khadali phalam naivedayami, Pugheephalasama-yuktam nagavalli dhalier yutam, Karpura churna samyuktam, Thambulam pratigrihyatham, Thambulam naivedayami.

Next he gives holy ashes (Vibhuti), bhilva leaves and water to those who are worshipping in the Mahamantap. A sthanikar then takes some boiled rice in a basin and covers it with a cloth; another brings a bell in his left hand, a dhupa and deepa in his right; and they go with music to all the lingas in the enclosure, the bhattar following. Before each linga the sthanikar takes off the cover a little, the bhattar waves his hand offering the naivedaya and presents the Dhupa and Deepa. The same is then done at the shrines of Vinayaka and Subramania, etc.

Next the bhattar pours water and lays down bhilva leaves and rice on each end of the threshold of the east door of the Mahamantapa. A copper image like a Trisula (Sribali [1] a Bali Devatha) fixed in a hemispherical base is now carried in a small palanquin by two men out at the east door of the Mahamantapa, down the north steps, and round the shrine by the south, the bhattar following and putting water, bhilva leaves and food on all the altars or balipeetams—of which there are nine to the south and three to the west of the shrine outside and three in front of the Mahamantapa. Coming round by the north, the palanquin is carried out to the Nandhi-mantapa round the north side of it, out into the second prakara and to the

(1) It may be of interest to note that there was a queen of Ceylon who died in 35 A.D. whose name was Sivali.

Yagasalai in the north-east. There the sthanikar puts fire into one of the Homakunda and the bhattar goes in and taking as much food thrice as his fingers can lift, he puts it into the fire saying, Devabali, Bhutabali, and Iswarabali. The palanquin is now brought back to the great gilt Balipeetam behind the *Dhuvajasthamba* on which the bhattar pours water and lays bhilva leaves and a ball of food from the tray carried by the attendant sthanikar; this he sprinkles with water saying:—Bahya-devatabhyo phalom Nividayami. This food is then given to the attendant whose duty it is to blow the conch. The bhattar then pours the remaining water on the balipeeta and throws the remaining bhilva leaves upon it, and the palanquin proceeds by the south side of the Nandhi to the Mahamantapa, ascending to the east door by the south steps. The bhattar now locks the door of the Ardhamantapa and the third a Kalasandhi puja ends, the time being now about 10 or 11 A.M.

The fourth service or the Uchikkala puja begins soon after the close of the last and is so exactly like the first after the Swami or the image has been removed from the Amman Temple that it need not be repeated again. It lasts about an hour and a half, after which the doors are locked and all go to their houses for meals.

Again, about half-past five, the drummers and some of the musicians sit in the porch and play vigorously in the shrillest of keys. At sunset the Sanku (conch) is blown in the porch and the lamps are lit. The sthanikars then open the doors and light [1] the temple and the bhattar having bathed and having put on clean cloth and ashes, comes and makes the Sayaraksha puja which is a repetition of

(1) The shrine being perfectly dark, lights are kept burning behind the Linga all day.

the third Udayakala puja described above. This is attended by many pilgrims and lasts till 9 or 10 P.M. The sixth and the last puja—Ardhajama, is also a repetition of the first including the Abhisheka. After this, the bhattar puts the golden image into a small palanquin and waves a camphor light before it; then the sthanikars preceded by musicians and the attendant, dancing girls, carry it out by the north steps in the east door, the bhattar presenting dhupa and deepa. He then offers betel-nuts and leaves (Kalangi) to the Nandhi. They bring the palanquin now round to the north side of the Nandhi, in front of the old treasury (Karuvelam) where again dhupa and deepa are presented, and again on the north-east opposite the store room. It then proceeds east and south along the second prakara to the south entrance into the Amman shrine. By the sides of the door out of the prakara are statues of Thirumalai Sethupathi (on the east) and his son Reghunatha Sethupathi, where it stops and the statues are honoured with garlands. At the south entrance of the Amman temple, the bhattar takes out the image and places it in the bed beside the Amman. Then camphor is lighted; the sthanikar brings milk and the bhattar offers it as *naivedayam*.

He now comes out and the dancing girl at the door repeats a thevaraunjal [1] or verse in honour of Siva:—

"*Mandiramam sadhuragiri kalkalaka, Mahameru Ponmalaiyam vittamaka, vindaiyanda seshan iru kayirkalaka, vilangukinra Meyjnanam palakayaka, tandirama mal ayanum vadantottatta Chaturmarayor arukirundhu sadangukatta, sundarame, tirumeninadar pankil tunaimalai nayakiyar adirunjal.*"

(1) Thevara a stanza in praise of God. Unjal—a swing.

"Mandira and Saduragiri mountains are turned as it were into two pillars for the suspension of the swing, Mahameru and Ponmalai are converted into beams ; the powerful Sesha has made himself into two cords, the tree of wisdom itself which shines supreme is turned into a plank ; Vishnu and Brahma hold the cord and sway the swing to and fro ; the learned vedic brahmins stand near and perform the necessary rites ; the beautiful Goddess Mala Malainayaki (Sanskrit-Parvadhavardhini) sits, by your side. Swing softly" The *Odhuvar* also repeats another thevaram.

Manana nokhi vaidehi tannai yoru mayaiyar.
Kanadhil vavviya kararakkan uyir settavan.
Yenamilappugal annal seyitavi Ramechhura.
Gnanamum nanporulagi ninra toru nanmaiye.

திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்.

" மானனநோக்கி வைதேகிதன்னை யொருமாயையாற்
கானகில் வவ்விய காரரக்கன்னுயிர் செற்றவ
னீனமில்லாப் புகழண்ணல்செய் தவிராமேச்சர
ஞானமு நன்பொருளாகி னிறைதரு நன்மையே."

That the daughter of Videha (Seeta) seeing the deer mistook it, without knowing that it was a Rakshasa come in disguise to entrap her has after all taken a beautiful turn by establishing for ever the name of Rameswaram.

The sthanikar meanwhile swings the cot to and fro, fans the images ; and the worshippers are supplied with the sacred ashes.

Other sthanikars now lock and seal the doors of all the shrines ; all go out and the sthanikar counts the jewels on the images, closes and seals the door, locking the prakara doors and departs about midnight.

VI

NAIVETHIAMS.

Naivethiam is of many kinds.—(*a*) Plantain fruit and cocoanut are given at all times (*b*) Puttu (Sanscrit 'Pishta' meal of rice with cocoanut scrapings and sugar) is offered some times at night (*c*) Milk mixed with jaggery is offered in the worship before dawn as well as bed time (*d*) Various kinds of cakes; mere rice cakes for the morning worship (Tamil-*Dosai*). Athirasa-Sweet cakes made of jaggery and rice flour. Mashapupa-flat ring cakes made of black pulse (*e*) Various preparations of boiled rice with vyanjanas (sauces and curries).

The preparations are.—Mudganna (rice and dholl or green pulse and a little salt and pepper).

Gulanna—jaggery, rice cooked in milk, dried grapes and spices.

Payasam—Milk, pulse, rice, sugar and spices (a semi-liquid preparation).

Sambharanna called *puliodharai* in tamil, and *Chittranna* in Telugu, rice seasoned with tamarind, salt and chillies.

The Mudganna is given along with rice cakes in the morning, the other sorts of rice at various times in the day or night. The Puliodharai at night and the sweet varieties at midday together with cakes or pulse. The devotee will give directions as to the particular kind of prasadam he wants to be offered and he has to make the payment for its preparation in advance. For himself he gets only a fifth of the prasadam actually prepared and offered to the God.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THEERTHAMS.

"*He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills*".

"PSALM C. IV."

"*But if Christians use it as a means of spiritual purification in Baptism and prayer; if Hindus pay reverence to their sacred streams, tanks, and river; if Parsi, Mahomedan and Christian alike believe in its efficacy, surely that element must have some great and occult significance.*"

THE SECRET DOCTRINE, VOL. I, P. 230.

I

ENUMERATION OF THE THEERTHAMS.

"All the holy Gods and Goddesses and all the holy waters love to live on Mount Gandhamadhana" says the *Skandha Purana* and hence it is no wonder that almost every fresh water well or tank in the land of the *Setu*, between the *Adi-Setu* and the present *Setu*, Dhanushkodi, happens to have a mystical sanctity about it, and an old tale to support it. The pious pilgrim will shut his eye to chronology and probability and give due value to these artless accumulations of piety which reverently trace the particles of dust rendered holy by the god-like hero's wanderings.

PLATE XIV.—Showing the sacred bath at ' Navapashanam ' or Devipatam where the nine stones representing the nine planets are planted in the sea.

Before proceeding to give detailed information from the *Skandha* regarding them, a classification is here offered of them for the guidance of the pilgrims.

Dhanushkodi, Agni-theertham, Navapashanam, and Dharbhasayanam are sea-baths :—

(*a*) Outside the island of Rameswaram :—

(1) Devipatnam (*Navapashanam*).

(2) Dharbhasayanam (*Adi-setu*) Tiruppullani is the Tamil name of the village. It means the village of the bed of holy grass.

(3) *Chakra-theertham* in the above village of Dharbhasayanam. See (1) in the puranic list of theerthams in the following section.

(4) Ksheera Gunda—also in Dharbhasayanam.

(5) Ramnad—the capital of the Sethupathis. The stone on which the first Sethupathi is said to have been crowned by Rama is in the Durbar hall called *Ramalinga Vilas*. A visit to this completes the *Setu-Yatra*.

(6) Papavinasa.

(7) Betalavarada—Theertham within a mile of Mandapam.

(*b*) In the island of Rameswaram :—

(1) Kapi Theertham
(2) Bhairava Theertham } In Pamban.

(3) Villuni
(4) Sita Kunda—Theerthams } are near Thankachimadam.

The former is a fresh water spring said to have sprung up when Rama pressed the point of his bow.

(5) Rinavimochana Theertham
(6) Pancha-pandava Theertham
(7) Mangala Theertham
(8) Amirta Vapi
} All near Ekanta Rameswaram.

(9) Jatai Theertham—A fresh water pool about a mile and a half towards South-east.

(10) Dhanushkodi (The Setu).

(*c*) In and about Rameswaram Town :—

(1) Rama Theertha or Kundam
(2) Lakshmana Theertha or Kundam
} Within a mile from the temple at the western extremity of the Town.

(3) Hanumath Kundam—A tank attached to a small temple two furlongs to the North-west of the great temple. (This is considered to be very important).

(4) Brahma Kundam—A marshy lagoon half a mile to the North of the great temple.

(5) Agasthya Theertham—A pool about a furlong to the North-east of the temple.

(6) Agni Theertham—The part of the bay directly opposite to the East gate of the great temple.

(7) Naga Theertham—A pond attached to a small shrine of Nagalingeswara in the compound of the Rama Manthiram opposite to the great temple on the North-east.

(8) Sugreva, Vali, Gaja, Kummuda, Anghada Jambhavan, Saratha, Bhima, Nakula, Sahadeva, Droupathi, and Parasurama Theerthams these and many more small ponds lie on the way to Mount Gandhamadhana.

(*d*) In the Rameswaram Temple :—There are about 22 theerthams :

(1) Maha Lakshmi Theertham (A rectangular pond adjoining the portico in front of the east portico. (This has a separate entrance and there is a small shrine of Goddess Lakshmi near it).

(2) Savithri
(3) Gayathri
(4) Saraswathi
} Small wells in the garden adjoining the Eastern portico near the Hanuman Temple.

(5) Ganga
(6) Yamuna
(7) Gaya
} In the second North prakaram.

(8) Soorya
(9) Chandra
(10) Brahmahathya Vimochana
} Back of the Visalakshi Amman Temple in the second North prakaram.

(11) Sankha
(12) Chakra
} Wells *Shrine* in the second East prakaram.

(13) *Sadhyamrtha Theertha* (A well adjoining the Navasakthi Mantapam of the Amman Temple).

(14) *Sarva Teertha* (A small well at the south-east corner of the Mantapa of Rameswaram inner-prakaram).

(15) *Siva Theertha* (A square, paved pond adjoining the Nandhi on the South side).

(16) *Kodi Theertha* (near Visalakshi Shrine in the Rameswara inner-prakaram).

(17) *Madhava Theertha* (A square tank in the western half of the temple and near the Madhava Shrine in the third prakaram).

(18)	Gandhamadhana	Theerthams: These wells are all situated in the compound of the Madhava Shrine.
(19)	Gavaksha	
(20)	Gavaya	
(21)	Nala	
(22)	Neela	

II

STORIES REGARDING THE THEERTHAMS.

Here are the puranic accounts of 24 important theerthams with some additional ones. They are all given in the order in which they are dealt with in the *Skandha Purana*; their location has been indicated as far as possible :—

1. *Chakra Theertha*[1] (at Dharbasayana).—Here the army of Sri Rama first halted ere it crossed the ocean. This was near the Mount *Mahendra*. Here *Vibhishana* met them. Its old name was *Dharma Theertha*. It was at the beginning of the Setu near Dharbasayanam. Here Dharma did penance for Siva and became his *vahana*. Here sage Galava made penance and was favoured by *Vishnu*. As the Chakra (Discus) of *Vishnu* saved him on one occasion from the grip of a hungry demon, the *Dharma Theertha* henceforth came to be known as *Chakra Theertha*. By bathing in this, King Udayana of Kousambi together with his queen and his favourite ministers was free from his curse and all resumed their former *Gandharva* forms and returned to heaven. Dharbasayanam is a lovely village two miles from the beach. The temple has a figure of Rama stretched on a couch of straw ; half way between this and the beach, there is white marble statuette of sage *Agasthya* under a tree on the road).

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(1) Different from the Chakra theertha in the temple of Rameswaram.

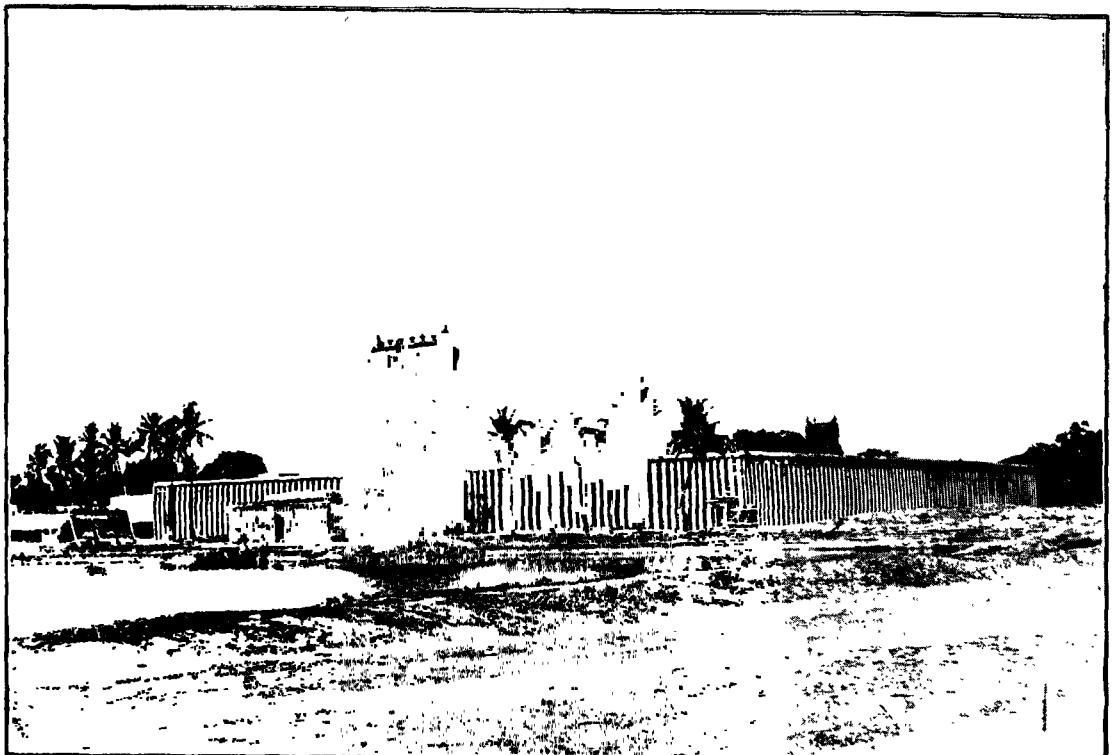

PLATE XV.—The front view of the sacred Temple of Tiruppullani with the holy Tank 'Chakra Thirtha'.

2. *Navapashanam* (*Devipatnam*).— Here the Devi Goddess Durga slew the buffalo-faced demon Mahesheswara. Hence the name Devipatnam. This was the easternmost point and Dharbasayanam *alias* Pullagramam was the westernmost point of the small peninsula as it was at the time of the construction of Rama's bridge. Rama set up nine stones for the nine planets in the sea at Devipatnam. Hence the place is also called the *Navapashanam*. Ramnad is between these two points. The pilgrim is advised to bathe first at *Navapashanam* and worship the planets as Rama did of yore and then proceed to *Dharbasayanam* which from the puranas and local traditions seems to have been the starting point of Rama's bridge. There are two temples one of Thilakeswara at Navapashanam and other of Jagannatha Swami at Dharbasayanam.

3. *Vetala Varadha Theertha* (near Mantapam), which restored the Gandharva prince from his double curse of human birth and ghoulish life which was the result of his assaulting the beautiful daughter of the sage Galava, while she was gathering flowers for her father's daily worship. His brother cursed into a mortal for abetting his crime was first freed from his curse by the sight of the Guru and then led his brother to this Theertha. The first bath freed him from his ghoulishness and the second bath restored to him his Gandharva form.

4. *Papavinasa Theertha* (near Mantapam) situated on Mount Gandhamadhana. It gave a final freedom from a series of rebirths to a Brahmin called Sumati (of the race of the Gargas) who had imparted vedic lore to a devotee Sudra.

5. *Sita Sarovara* (Sita Gunda).—This is near Tanghachimadam. All the holy waters of the earth

reside here. Siva also resides here to remove the sins of those who bathe here devoutly. This Theertham sprang up in the place where Sita came out uninjured from the fire[1] to clear her husband's doubts regarding her purity. Another version is that *Vedavathi* the previous incarnation of *Sita* had immolated herself here. Here *Indra* purified himself from the taint of Brahmahatya which clung to him when he killed a demon who was the offspring of a sage called *Suchi* and a *Rakshasa* maiden.

6. *Mangala Theertham* (near Ekanta Rameswaram). This is also on Mount Gandhamadhana. Here Lakshmi resides. All the Gods bathe here daily to ward off adversity. King Manojava of the Lunar race recovered his kingdom by bathing in this for three months according to the advice of sage *Parasara*.

7. *Ekanta Ramanath* and the *Amirta Vapi*.—Here Rama retired with his council of war while the ocean bridge was building. In this place which was free from the noise of the ocean, they were able to concert measures for the attack on *Lanka*. The well in the temple verandah is called the *Amirta Vapi* because it gives salvation (Amirta) to one who bathes in it for a period of three years. The brother of the sage Agastya obtained it so. The *Lord Siva* will favour the devotees who bathe here.

8. *Brahma Kundam* (4 furlongs to the north of Rameswaram Temple). Here Brahma performed a series of Yagnams to free himself from the curse of Siva for his sin of uttering a falsehood. In the competition with *Vishnu*, he lied that he had seen the top of the luminous linga (in which form Siva chose to appear as

(1) (One is led to think from the Ramayana that this must have taken place in Rama's camp in the island of Lanka itself. See 14, below.)

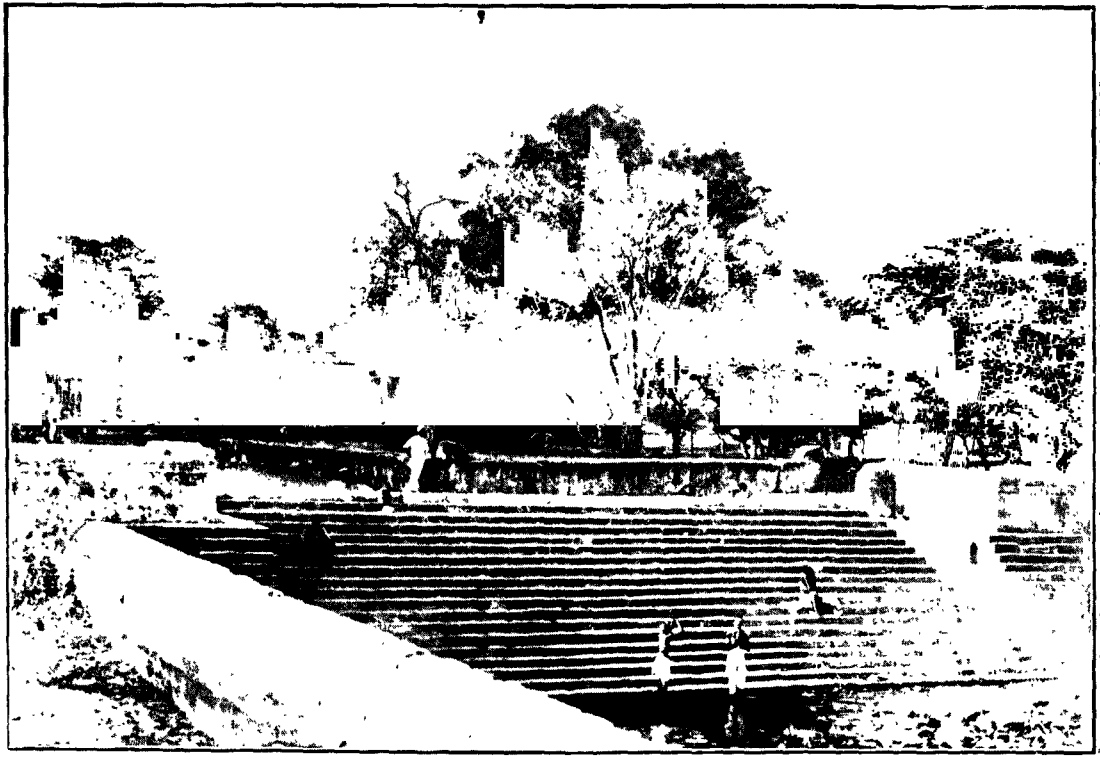

PLATE XVI.—Showing the inner view of the 'Mangala' Thirtha and the Aswatha tree (Ficus Religiosa) and the Mantap on the North Side.

Umpire), whereas Vishnu confessed his failure to discover the bottom of the linga. Bath in the kundam and wearing of the ash abounding there, will remove all sorts of sin.

9. *Hanumat Kundam* (3 furlongs to the north-west of the Rameswaram Temple). This was fashioned by Hanuman for the use of Rama's troops. King Dharmasaka obtained a hundred sons by bathing in it and performing a *putra kameshti* on its banks. In extreme old age, he returned, to the same and meditating on *Siva* there he obtained salvation

10. *Agastya Theertham* (about a furlong to the north-east of the Rameswaram Temple). Here forever resides sage Agastya with his consort *Lopamudra* for *Siva* and his consort appeared to him here in their bridal robes. Here according to the instruction of the sage, *Uttanka*, a Brahmin lad named Kakshivan the son of sage Deerghatapas of Vedaranyam did penance for three years and obtained a divine, four-tusked, white elephant and the hand of a princess, the daughter of King *Svanaya*.

11. *Rama Theertham* (a mile due west of the Rameswaram Temple). Here penance was done by the sage *Suteekshana*, disciple of *Agastya* and various kinds of *Siddhi* and power obtained. King Yudhishtra bathed here for a month according to the instructions of the sage *Vyasa* to cleanse himself of the sin of uttering a falsehood to compass the death of his *Guru* in battle, and to fit himself for coronation. On the bank of this, there is a linga which should be visited after bathing in the Theertham.

12. *Lakhmana Theertham* (about a hundred yards west of the above). Bathing in this and worshipping the

linga set up by *Lakshmana* on its bank will secure all sorts of blessing to a person. This was the means by which *Balarama,* the elder brother of *Krishna,* cleansed himself of the sin of killing a learned Brahmin (the father of *Suta,* the great narrator of Puranas) in a moment of irritation.

13. *Jatai Theertham* (also by usage, it is called Jatayu Theertham) about a mile or a mile and a half south-east of Rameswaram along the Dhanushkoti old Railway line. It contains fresh water. It is so called because Rama first laved his locks of hair (Jatas) in it after killing *Ravana.* A bath herein gives self-knowledge and purity and clearness of mind. *Suka* following his father Vyasa's instructions obtained them in this manner. *Brighu, Dhurvasa* and Dhattatreya also resorted to this for internal purification.

14. *Lakshmi Theertham* (to the righthand side of the portico in front of the Hanumar Temple). Bathing in this according to the instructions of Krishna, Yudhishtra obtained the wealth and power necessary for his *Rajasuya* sacrifice. *Kubera* got his treasures by bathing in this Theertham. It removes sin and gives prosperity. The Devas were by this enabled to remove the *Daityas. Nalakubera* secured the divine damsel *Rambha* for his mate by this means.

15. *Agni Theertham* (the bay directly opposite to the east tower of the temple). With the water of this *Theertham* sage *Suteekshana,* a disciple of *Agastya* freed a merchant youth from the *pisacha* form into which he had fallen through the curse of a *Muni* whose son he had drowned in a forest pond. This theertham sprang up in the place where the *God of Fire* brought *Seeta* from

the funeral pyre to Rama testifying to her chastity and purity. (1)

16. *Chakra Theertham* (in the second prakaram just to the left of the entrance to the God's temple) *alias* Sakra Theertham within the temple of Ramanatha so called it is protected by Vishnu's discus (Chakra). It restores broken and lost limbs. By a bath in this, the *Sun God* himself once recovered his arms which had been destroyed by receiving a hot oblation offered to him at a sacrifice conducted by *Indra* on the bank of this Theertham to overcome the *Asuras*. Its other name Sakra Theertham seems to be due to this association with *Indra*.

17. *Siva Theertham* (a square pond a little to the south of the Nandhi), established by God *Siva* himself. His irate incarnation *Kala Bairava* on one occasion cut off the heads of *Brahma* in a fight to bring the latter to a sense of his inferiority to *Siva*. *Brahma* was duly revived thereafter but the sin of killing a Brahmin had to be expiated by *Kala Bairava* by bathing in holy places. Three parts of the sin went off by bathing in the *Ganges* at Benares and burying the skulls of Brahma there. (That place is known as *Kapala Theertham* still). The remaining part of the sin was removed by a bath in the Siva Theertham, on *Mount Gandhamadhana*.

18. *Sankha Theertham* (near 16 above) called after a sage called *Sankha* who did penance here. Here a sage called *Vatsanabha* was freed from the sin of ingratitude which was the result of his neglecting to worship a miraculous huge Buffalo, (God Dharma

(1) *N.B.*—(See 5 above and the footnote thereon).

himself) which had shielded him from deluging downpour sent by the jealous God to disturb his penance.

19.	Ganga Theertham.	(In the north side of the second prakaram.)
20.	Yamuna Theertham.	
21.	Gaya Theertham.	
22.	Soorya Theertham.	
23.	Chandra Theertham.	
24.	Brahmahatya Vimochana Theertham.	

The first three springs sprang out of the ground at the invocation of a sage called *Raikva* who could not go for a bath in the much desired *Yamuna* on account of his lameness. A king called *Jatasruti* famous for his munificence to the poor and the needy, obtained peace of mind and *Brahmagnana* by a bath herein according to the instructions of sage *Raikva.*

25. *Koti Theertham.*—(In the Rameswaram inner prakaram and by the side of the Visalakshi's Shrine) formed by *Sree Rama* with the pressure of one end of his bow for the Abhisheka of the Linga established by himself. Finding the water insufficient, he prayed to *Ganga* and she promised to make the *Theertham* perennial. Sree Krishna freed himself from the sin of killing his maternal uncle, Kamsa, by bathing in this Theertham. *The bath should be taken only after bathing in all the other theerthams for freedom from any residual sin. Otherwise the bath will be fruitless.* After this bath, one should perform *Abishekam* with its waters to *Ramanatha* and then return to his home and worship *Sree Rama.*

26. *Sadhyamirta Theertham.*—In front of the *Parvathavardhini Shrine* adjoining the inner prakaram : removes all sins. King *Pururava* by bathing in this

regained *Urvasi* whom he had lost through the curse of the divine music-master Thumburu.

27. *Sarva Theertham* (adjoining the Rameswara Mantapa in the inner prakara).—An old sage of the *Brighu* race, called *Sucharita* desired to bathe in all holy waters but his old age and debility stood in the way. So he began to worship Siva on *Mount Gandhamadhana.* Through God's grace the spring in which he bathed became invested with the holiness of all theerthams, (Sarva Theertham). By bathing in it, he became young again. It is also called Manasa Theertham, because the God attracted all holy waters into it through the force of his mind.

28. *Dhanushkoti.*—This has been so called because when *Rama* was asked by *Vibhishana* to break up the bridge lest hostile princes of the mainland should find easy access to his kingdom along the same. he first broke the bridge in that place with the end of his bow *(Dhanuskoti).* Ability, prosperity, fame and purity of mind and knowledge and freedom from desires will be the fruit of bathing at this point of the junction of the seas. All sorts of sins from theft to Brahmicide will be removed. Death is best on the bank of the *Ganges,* penance is best on the bank of *Narmadha,* and gifts are of the highest worth when made in *Kurakshetra.* Whereas gifts, penance and death—all three in this place bear alike the highest fruit of salvation. One should bathe here and fast for three days; and give gifts to Brahmins and offerings to the *manes.* All the Gods love to reside in the holy water here. One Brahmin at least should be fed here by the pilgrim who wishes to have happiness in this world as well as in the other.

This Theertham is sacred at all times and especially confers salvation and bliss during the month of *Magha*, the sacred seasons known as *Ardhodaya* and *Mahodaya*, and at the time of a solar or lunar eclipse. One should free oneself from the debt to the *pitries* (*manes*) in this holy place. Aswathama was rid of the sin of killing sleeping persons by bathing in this holy place according to the advice of the relenting *Vyasa*. One whole month he followed a regular course of bathing in the *Setu* and worshipping *Ramanatha*. And then fasted and observed a vigil during one night wherein he meditated on *Mahadeva*. In the rapture of praise, he danced and sang and burst into tears. The Lord *Mahadeva* appeared to him and assured him of absolution from the sin of killing sleeping persons. Thereafter Aswathama was welcomed in the assemblies of Brahmins and sages.

King *Dharmakupta*, the son of *Nandha* was here freed from the madness which seized him as the result of betraying a trusted friend. He lost his way in the course of a hunt and spent the night on a tree. A bear pursued by a lion also took refuge in the same. The bear and the King came to an agreement to guard each other and slept by turns. Listening to the casuistries of the lion, the prince pushed down the sleeping bear which however clung to a branch and saved itself The bear became the sage *Dyanakashata* and the lion became a *Gandharva* when the former recounted the happenings of his former birth. They both went their way but the sage cursed the prince for his breach of faith.

Paravasu, the son of Raibhya, was freed in the Setu from the sin of accidentally killing his father mistaking him for some wild beast at night.

A Brahmin youth called *Sumathi* was purified of the sin of Brahmahatya and theft by bathing in the Setu six months according to the advice of the sage *Dhurvasa.* Another Brahmin youth called *Durvineetha* was purified of incest by the same means, and lived a holy life thereafter. A pair of Brahmin youths who had been guilty of breaking promise and of theft towards a Brahmin, became a jackal and a monkey respectively, but by the grace of a sage called *Sindhudveepa*, they were advised to go to the *Setu.* There they were purified and got salvation. A Brahmin of the Godavari region called *Durachara* degraded himself in all sorts of ways and was ultimately possessed by a *Vedhala* (pisacha). In the course of his wandering, he happened to touch the Setu and the *Vedhala* left him and knowledge and purity returned.

29. *Ksheera Kundam.*—This is a theertham in *Dharbhasayanam* formed by *Viswakarma* and filled by *Kamadhenu* with her milk at the bidding of *Vishnu* who was pleased with sage Mudgala's sacrifice and at his request for a constant supply of milk for his worship.

Here *Kadru*, the mother of serpents cleaned herself of the sin of getting a deceitful victory over her co-wife *Vinatha* by asking some of her offspring to cover the tail of Indra's horse and making it look black instead of white as *Vinatha* maintained. He who bathes in this, will acquire splendour like that of *Agni*; and to such even the flaming river of hell called Vaitarani will be cool. "Those who leave this Theertham and go after others, are like those who leave cow's milk and run after the milk of the *erukam* plant."

30. *Kapi Theertham* near Pamban. On Mount Gandhamadhana; formed by the Vanara forces of Rama on

the eve of their crossing over to Lanka. By the accidental sprinkling of the water of this, *Rambha* was freed from her petrified form into which she had been cursed by sage *Viswamitra* when she attempted to tempt him away from his severe penance.

31. *Gayatri*
32. *Savitri* } *Theerthams.*
33. *Saraswati*

There are in the third prakaram of the Rameswaram temple formed by the Goddesses Gayatri, Savitri, and Saraswati respectively for their daily bath on the Mount *Gandhamadhana* wither they went for performing penance to propitiate *Siva* who had slain their Lord *Brahma*. They were his daughters; yet Brahma desired them as wives. They assumed the forms of the deer and fled. He also became a deer and ran after them. *Siva* in the form of hunter pursued and slew him. The head of the fallen deer was enskyed as the constellation of *Mriga Seersham*. Siva is also to be seen there in the star *Ardra* in the constellation known as *Mriga Vyadha Mandala* (Orion). To prevent the example from spreading in the world, he had punished Brahma, but pleased with the devotion of the ladies, God Siva, permitted Brahma to revive and take them to his own Loka. A bath at these wells removes sin and secures the fulfilment of all desires. A Brahmin called *Kasyapa*, who had sinned by yielding to a bribe of Takshaka and withholding the benefit of his omnipotent antidote-charm from the King *Parikshit* doomed to die of serpent-bite, bathed at these theerthams and was absolved. Further penance made the Goddess appear to him and confer all blessings upon him.

34. *Ranavimochana Theertham* (near 5 above) frees one from all sorts of debts to men, sages, pitris and Gods.

35. *Panchapandava Theertham* (near the above) where the Pandavas performed a sacrifice for their prosperity.

36. *Deva Theertham* (near the above) frees one from the sin of all sorts of neglect of duty and gives absolution from births and deaths.

37. *Sugreeva Theertham.*—Gives the merit of performing the *Aswamedha* and *Agnishtoma.*

38. (*a*) Nala, (*b*) Neela, (*c*) Gavaya, (*d*) Gavaksha, (*e*) Gandhamadhana, (*f*) Angada, (*g*) Gaja, (*h*) Sarabha, (*i*) Kumuda, (*j*) Panasa, (*k*) Jambavan, and (*l*) Vaali theerthams, etc., formed by the Vanara leaders for their troops. The first five are in the compound of the Madhava Shrine, while others are on the way to Mount Gandhamadhana. All these are capable of curing disease and freeing one from sin and grief.

39. Vibheeshana Theertham and four theerthams formed by his ministers. Release from sin and grief. Herein the holy river *Sarayu* swells for the service of *LORD RAMANATHA.*

"ALL HOLY THEERTHAMS AND ALL THE GODS LOVE TO DWELL ON MOUNT GANDHAMADHANA."

CHAPTER X.

THE SETUPATHIES.

"And having got the Setu constructed by Nala Rama for the security thereof, bespoke the prince, the ruler of that good land thus :—"Do thou look after my Setu, and the God of Gods, the Lord of Dharbhasana (Dharbhasayanam). So shalt thou be called the guardian of the Setu."

(THE AGNI PURANA).

I

ORIGIN OF THE TITLE.

"No pilgrimage to the Setu, it is said, can be, complete without getting a look at the famous Setupathi" said the Maharaja of Travancore in his reply to the address of the people of Ramnad. The Marava chieftains have been from time out of mind traditionally connected with the Setu as its guardians. The passage from the Agni purana placed at the head of this chapter seems to hold that the local ruler was asked by Rama at the time when the Bridge was finished to look after the bridge and the temple established there. The ruler is said to be an Aryabhumipa. This word may mean that he was the ruler of a good land or a ruler in the land of Aryas as opposed to Lanka which was the land of Rakshasas.

But it is believed that Rama installed Guha as the first Setupathi. Who was this Guha? Was he the boatman that ferried Rama over the Ganges in his exile?

The Skanda Purana does not mention the Setupathies. The Ramayana does not even make Rama think of the safety of the Setu. It is nowhere said that Guha followed Rama in his exile. When did Rama send for him and anoint him ? According to the Ramayana, Rama did not alight at the Setu after conquering Ceylon.

This installation then must have been made at the time when Rama made a pilgrimage to the Setu coming back to it in his Pushpaka for this purpose sometime after his coronation, according to the account in the Ananda Ramayana, or at the time when according to the Padma Purana, he broke the Setu in two places to allay the fears of Vibhishana. In the latter case, there is no need for a guardian. But in the former case, the advent of Guha is possible. The Setupathies trace their descent from him. The Sethupathi family of which the Rajah of Ramnad is the representative, is the head of the great tribe in South India known as the Maravars. They were as the feudatories of the Pandyan dynasty, upon whose ruins they rose, for some generations with regal power extending their conquests into all the southern portion of the Peninsula and a great part of Ceylon. But over and above all this, they are, as their name implies, the hereditary guardians of the sacred causeway, of Rameswaram. In this capacity, they are well known to the thousands of pilgrims who annually visit the shrine of God Ramanatha at that place and who all believe that the first Setupathi was installed in his office by this deified hero himself.

At the installation, it is said that the hero presented him with a weapon called ' Valatady ' a boomerang which in shape is a semi-circle representing, in the belief of the pilgrims one half of the sacred weapon used by Rama called " Chakra."

II

AGE OF THE RAMNAD COUNTRY.

"There is reason to believe that the present Ramnad country had been in existence in very early times even before the Bharata period at the third Yuga or the Copper Age, for there are temples in this estate which according to their Sthalapuranams (local legends of the temple) are said to have been founded and endowed by the Chackravarthies—the emperors of the early period, *viz.*, Muchikunda Sree Rama of Gude and others of Threta Yuga the second or silver age."

"There are also Dharmasanam villages or grants for subsistence made to the Brahmin community in the country, which appear from copper sasanams or deeds of grant to have been made by early Chackravarthies such as Pururava, Manu, Muchkonda and others."

"From sasanams and other inscriptions, it appears that there were in existence from very early times, towns which are now comprised in the present, Ramnad Estate."

The Sthalapurana of Tirushuli temple says that Arjuna visited it on his way to Manalur, the capital of the Pandyan kingdom whose princess, Chitrangada, he married. Various early Pandya rulers are said to have founded temples very early in the Kali age in the Ramnad country; (*e.g.*) Varaguna Pandya founded the temple at Rajasingamangalam in the 16th year of Kali age. Sundara Pandya founded one at Kamankottai even prior to this. As some of the Pandyas seem to have assumed the title of Chackravarthi, they must have subjugated the Ramnad country.

III

Early History.

The following is an extract from Nelson's Madura Manual, 1868.

"It is stated that when Rama appointed the first Setupathi the Pandya regarded the appointment with favour and granted him free of tribute all the jungly tracts of country adjoining to the sea-coast."

"Afterwards when the Chola King invaded the Pandya country and was about to defeat the king, Athiveera Regunatha Setupathi, drove him back with loss and he was rewarded for this service with the appointment of the "Warden of the Tondi Harbour".

"Afterwards when the King of Canara and the other countries invaded the Pandya's dominions and caused him great loss, Parabity Sethupathi came to the rescue and drove back the enemy. For this service, he was given the title of Establisher of the Pandya throne and was granted the districts of Thirushuli, Pallimadam and Thiruppuvanam."

"After a long period in the time of Varaguna Regunatha, some Telugu invaders drove the Chola out of his kingdom. The Chola came for help to Pandya and the Setupathi was sent to repel the invader. This expulsion was successfully effected and the Setupathi was rewarded with the title of Establisher of Chola country."

"After many generations in the time of Kulothunga Setupathi, the Chola invaded the Pandya country. He was driven back to Pattukottai and Arantangi and this portion of the kingdom was annexed by the victorious Setupathi who thereupon assumed the title of 'He who

conquers the countries seen and never lets go countries conquered'."

"Samara Kolakala Regunatha Setupathi was sent by the Pandya to settle a boundary dispute between him and the Chola. He executed his commission with fidelity and was rewarded by the Chola with the monopoly of the pearl fishery in the Gulf of Mannar whilst the Pandya conferred the following titles on him. Rajathi Raja Raja Parameswara Raja Marthanda Raja Gambeera."

"After this when all the countries between the Cape Comorin and the river Narbhada were under the authority of the Royar of Vijayanagar and the countries north of the Narbhada under that of the Badsha--a confederacy of Hindu Kings was formed against the Mahomedans by order of the Royar and amongst the others, the Setupathi was sent by the Pandya as his representative. The Setupathi performed distinguished services and the Chola also took part in the war ceded to the Setupathi apparently by the order of the Royar the districts of Mannarkoil, Tiruvallur and Devakottah and the privilege of raising the Monkey banner and the Garuda banner was bestowed upon him as appears from the heraldic work the Virudavally list of titles sung out to this day at important festivals. Further the old copper plate grants speak of the Setupathi as the Commander that established the Pandya Mandalam, the Commander that established the Chola Mandalam, the guardian of the Thondayan shore, he who has the Garuda and Hanuman ensigns on his flags."

It is a significant fact that the old copper plate grants speak of the Setupathies as the Commander that established the Chola Mandalam, the Thondayan shores, he who has the Garuda and Hanuman ensigns on his

flag, etc. This and the Virudavalli lists of titles announced by the herald to this day at important festivals go to support the above information which was supplied to Mr. Nelson by Ponnuswami Thevar, Manager of the Estate 1857-68. This is the only information available regarding the ancient history of the Setupathi which is extremely shadowy before 1605 when Sadaika Thevar Odayar Setupathi became the ruler. But Mr. Nelson and the writer of the Ramnad Manual both are of opinion that all available evidence goes to support the claim to the high antiquity put forward by the Ramnad Royal family.

No doubt in course of time the Setupathies lost all their original power and splendour and were doomed to comparative obscurity. What position they occupied in these times of obscurity is described by the Chronicler of the acts of the Setupathies. He states :—" In the early times when Chakravarthies flourished, seven persons from among the inhabitants of the Ramnad peninsular coast were appointed to be its guardians. When thus through a long and traditionary period they had continued through many generations to guard it, one among the seven who was named Sadaika Thevar Odayar Setupathi being the chief of the seven, received authority to rule this Ramnad kingdom. This Sadaika Thevar is said to have been crowned at the age of 12 with the universal consent of all the marava tribes of the country. The tribes therefore must have been suffering from anarchy and hankering for a strong king.

" It appears that in 1153 A.D., Parakrama Bahu ascended the throne of Lanka (Ceylon) and conquered many of his enemies in the Jambu Dwipa or the continent of India. About the year 1173 A.D., he invaded the

Madura Kingdom and after several battles, the island of Rameswaram was taken and held by him. To corroborate this, is still an inscription at Dambala in Ceylon which states that Parakrama Bahu, King of Ceylon (1155-88) built a temple at Rameswaram called the Nissenkeswara temple. The name of the then Pandya King is given as Kulasekara (*vide* p. 274 of Mr. Sewell's Archæological survey of South India, Vol. II).

"Parava kings seem to have been ruling at Kilakarai according to the Madura Sthalapuranam (58th story). When the Portuguese began to trade with India (1497-1538) they became Christians and were helped to throw off the Mahomedan yoke. The paravas became poor and wretched after the decline of the Portuguese power.

"Hiranyagarbayaji Regunatha Setupathi Kotta Thevar is styled the conqueror of Jaffna and Ceylon in a copper plate grant of his dedicating one boat with five stones in the pearl fishery in the Gulf of Mannar as Inam for charitable acts.

"The Pandyan Chronicle seems to contain a statement to the effect that the Setupathies or rulers at Rameswaram had conquered their masters at Madura and reducing these to a state of feudatories for three reigns; the same having occurred antecedent to the Vijayanagar ascendancy."

In another document (called O. H. M.), it seems that it is stated that after destroying the Vellalars of the Pandya Race, the Maravas ruled over them for 14 generations during nearly 608 years.

From the 6th century B. C. when Vijaya conquered Ceylon and colonised it from Hindustan, invasions of

Ceylon seem to have been constantly taking place. Chola and Pandya invasions are tracable even in the beginning of the Christian era.

The last of the three Tamil invasions of Ceylon mentioned in the *Mahavamsa* seems to have been made by Tamils who were ruled by a dynasty of Rajahs who held their court at Nallur. These must have been the Setupathies who held their court at Veeravanallur a coast town near Ramnad (according to the memorandum of the Manager Ponnuswami Thevar).

From the Pandiamandalam Rajakkal, the Pandian Chronicle and O. H. M. (Old History of Madura), we learn that the Setupathi family was in existence during the reign of the Pandyas, that they were at first vassals of the latter for guarding the coast, but subsequently becoming powerful conquered them and reduced them to the state of feudatories, and had this ascendancy over the Pandian kingdom for several generations. The officers of the Vijayanagar King seem to have driven them back into their own provinces.

The Gazetteer of Southern India says that about 1380, the chief of Ramnad became independent of Madura. On the authority of Dr. Burgess, it is stated in *The Dynasties of South India* by Mr. Sewell that "there was an Udayan Setupathi in Saka 1336 (1414-15 A. D.) who built the shrine of the inner temples at Rameswaram and gave four villages in the Tinnevelly District to the temple." We also learn that there was a Chinniya Udayan Setupathi who in S. S. 1411 (1488-90 A. D.) made additions to a temple, and a Thirumalai Setupathi who in Saka 1422 (1500-01) built part of the second prakara and had a son named Regunatha Thirumalai who was alive in Saka 1461 (1539-40 A. D.)

IV

LATER HISTORY.

From the pedigrees filed by their descendants we are able to know something about the Setupathies after 1600. The present Setupathi seems to be the 23rd in order from Sadaika Thevar who reigned from 1605-21. For a detailed account of them see Chapter V, Ramnad Manual, pages 210-272. Their capitals were successively at Veeravanallur, Bogalore and lastly at Ramnad.

I. 1605-21 A. D. SADAIKA THEVAR UDAYAN SETUPATHI.

His was a very benevolent reign. He was crowned at the age of 12. A cobra was found spreading its hood over him one day, and great things were prophesied of him. His other name was *Udayan Regunatha*. He was restored to the dominion of his murdered grandfather, *Jayathunga* for his tactful behaviour towards Viswanatha Naick of Madura. The latter's son Krishnama Naick made him Viceroy and Chief of 72 poligars. Peace was restored to the country, towns were fortified and cultivation was encouraged. He gave some villages to the temple especially to that of Rameswaram.

II. 1622-35 A. D. KUTTAN SETUPATHI.

He had a peaceful and prosperous reign and added some buildings to the Rameswaram temple.

III. 1635-46 A. D. (SADAIKA TAEVAR II) DALAVOY SETUPATHI.

He was a pious and peaceful prince. A rebellion was raised by his illegitimate brother. At the same time, there was an invasion of his country by Thirumala Naick. He was defeated at Pamban and imprisoned but was soon restored by the intercession of North Indian Vaishnavite Bairagis. He was at last murdered by his illegitimate brother, the rebel Thumby. The kingdom was then divided into three parts by the conspirators.

IV. 1647-72. REGUNATHA THIRUMALAI SETUPATHI.

He re-united the province and later defeated a Mysorean of the kingdom of Madura and this won Thirumal Naick's favour and the titles of "*Thirumalai Setupathi*" and the 'Protector of the Queen's *tali*' (*Mangalya Sutra*). He was permitted to use a lion-faced palanquin and his tribute was waived.

He put down a rebellion of poligars and later on defeated a Mahomedan invasion by Khubkhan.

When misunderstandings arose between him and the King of Madura, he retired to Ramnad. He planned the village of Rameswaram and resided there constantly. He performed a "*Hiranya garba yagam.*" Hence the hereditary title of "*Hiranya garbayaji*" of the Setupathies. He gave 50 Dharmasanam villages to Brahmins. He endowed the Kodanda Rama Chattram at Rameswaram. He built some temples and gave endowments to many others.

V. 1672. RAJA SURIA SETUPATHI.

Nephew of the above. Within six months after his accession, he was defeated in a war against the King of Tanjore and imprisoned and murdered.

VI. 1673. ATHANA REGHUNATHA SETUPATHI.

Brother of the above. He died within three months after his accession.

VII. 1674-1710. KILAVAN (REGHUNATHA) SETUPATHI.

He was the great grandson of an uncle of the above. He was an able ruler and brave in war. He rescued the King of Madura from the clutches of Rustam Khan. Hence his title of "*Para Raja Kesari.*" He murdered tactfully those who had raised him to the throne in order to prevent further plots. He was hard on the Christians and executed the Jesuit John De Britto; but relaxed the severity after the death of his minister *Dalavoy Kumara Pillai* who is thought to have instigated him.

In 1702, he defeated the combined armies of Madura and Tanjore and thereafter repelled the invasions of the King of Tanjore. In 1694, he entered into a treaty with the Dutch about the pearl-fishery in the Bay of Mannar. In 1709, he created the Pudukkottah Estate and gave it to the brother of a Kallar girl that he had married.

He removed the capital from Bogalore to Ramnad and put up stone fortifications to the latter. He also constructed the famous hall, "RAMALINGA VILAS".

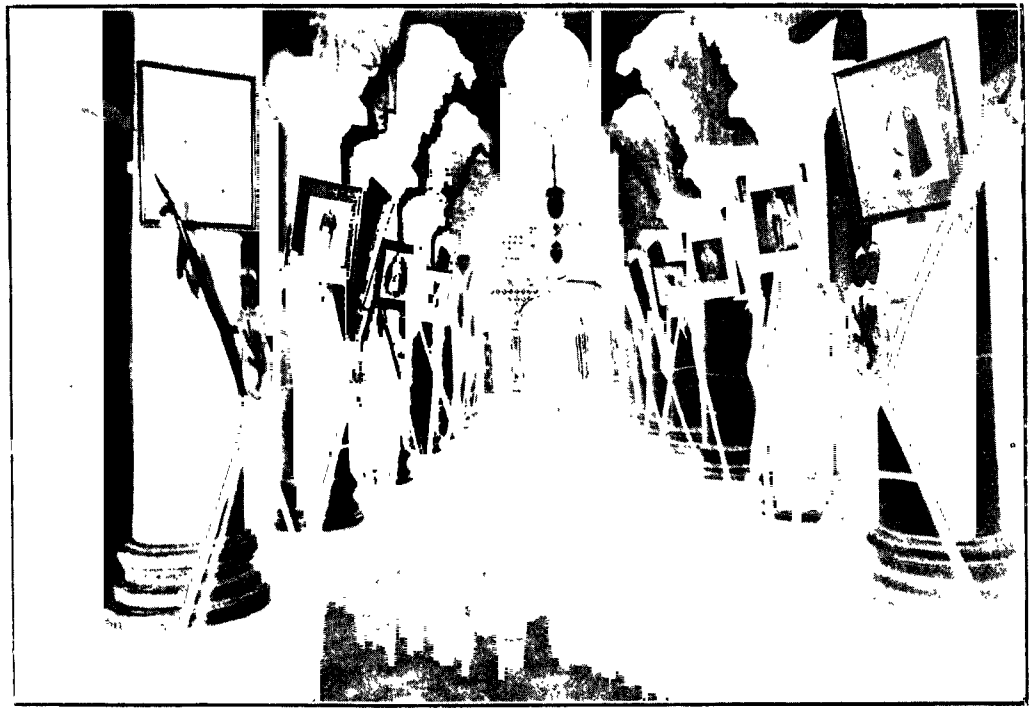

PLATE XVII.—The "Ramalinga Vilas" where the 'Sacred Stone' is reverentially kept and where the Sethupathies are wont to hold their Dharbars

On 18-12-1709 at 7 A.M. a terrific storm broke out. The sea swelled and swept over the whole of the Marava country. The inundation caused great damage to the people and the land. The land was spoiled by the salt water and the huge deposits of sand and famine ensued. At this time, there was also invasion from Tanjore but it was repelled. The famine made many of the people emigrate to Tanjore and Madura.

He died in 1710 and his 47 wives performed a great *suttee*. A temple was erected over the spot.

VIII. 1711-25. VIJAYA REGHUNATHA SETUPATHI (THIRUVADAYA THEVAR).

The son of the sister of the above prince. He improved the country repairing the damage done by the tempest and gave a proper basis to the Revenue system of his province. He divided the province into 72 military divisions. He performed a "*Hiranya Garba Yagam*" at Ramnad and built the Kothanda Raman Temple there.

He loved Rameswaram temple and made large additions to it. Almost every evening he used to go to Rameswaram covering the distance of 33 miles by means of relays. He helped pilgrims in the crossing of the Pamban Channel and in the long march to Dhanushkoti. He killed his own son-in-law for levying a small boat-fee on the pilgrims in order to have the path from Pamban to Rameswaram paved. His two daughters, the wives of dead, committed *suttee* at Thangachimadam (see Chapter IV above). He built the temple of Muthu Ramalinga Swami at Lakshmipuram at Ramnad. He died of an epidemic at Arantangi.

IX. 1726. SUNDARESWARA REGHUNATHA SETUPATHI.

A son-in-law of the above. He was soon defeated and put to death by an illegitimate son of No. VII above with the assistance of the King of Tanjore.

X. 1726-29. BAVANI SANKAR SETUPATHI.

The murderer of the above. He was defeated and imprisoned by Kattaya Thevar, brother of the above with the aid of a discontented poligar called Sasivarna Thevar and the King of Tanjore who was incensed at the behaviour of Bhavani Sankar in now refusing to give him some coveted districts which he had promised previously.

XI. 1730-35. KATTAYA THEVAR.

Also called Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha His accession marks the end of a Maravar Kingdom. Tanjore took a part of it and Sasivarna took the Sivaganga Estate for his share. Only three-fifths of the province remained for the Setupathi.

Kattaya was a liberal and pious prince. He built chattrams, gave Dharmasanams and made many endowments to temples.

XII. 1736-48. SIVA KUMARA MUTHU VIJAYA REGHUNATHA SETUPATHI.

He was also called Saiva Durai. He abstained from animal food and endowed chattrams and temples. The third prakara of the Great Rameswaram Temple was begun by him. He died without any issue.

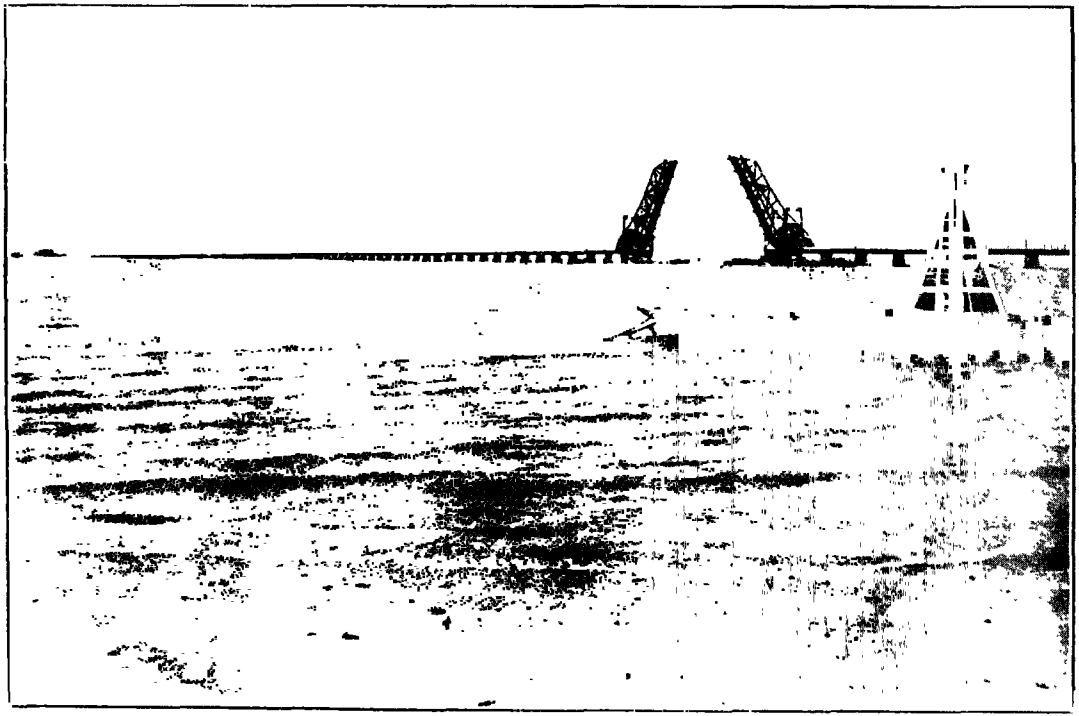

PLATE XVIII.—Showing the opening of the Scherzer bridge and the view of the viaduct from Pamban to Tonitural.

XIII. 1748-49. SETUPATHI RACKA THEVAR.

He was a cousin of No. XI and was nominated by the minister of the above named Vellaiyan Servagar who was both Dalavoy and minister. He was shortly deposed by the same person.

XIV. 1749-62. SELLA THEVAR.

Sella Thevar (Muthu Vijaya Reghunatha), was the grandson of an aunt of No. XII. He had relations with Madura, the Mahomedans, and the English and was taking one or the other side occasionally but no permanent advantage accrued from the relations. He allowed the Dutch to erect a fortress at Kilakkarai.

XV. 1763-72 and 1782-95. MUTHU RAMALINGA SETUPATHI.

He was a son of the sister of the above. He was two months old at the time of accession. His mother was the regent and Damodaram Pillai was the minister. He ably defended the country against the Mahomedans who conquered Madura and against the King of Tanjore but he was assassinated.

In 1773, the English force defeated the forces of the Setupathi for the sake of Chanda Sahib and imprisoned him, and his mother and his sisters. In 1782, he was restored and agreed to pay to the Nawab a tribute of 1¾ lakhs of rupees. His minister Pitchai Pillai completed the *Chockatan Mantapam* or the cloistered precincts of the temple at Rameswaram.

In 1792, Chanda Sahib ceded the Ramnad country to the British and they finding the Zemindar refractory deposed him in 1799 and managed the Zemindari for 8 years themselves 1795-1803.

XVI 1803-07. RANEE MANGALESWARI NATCHIYAR SETUPATHI.

Sister of the above prince. Her tactful behaviour pleased the British and she was given the Zemindari. Her reign was remarkable for many charitable endowments and particularly for the confirmation of old Dharmasanam grants to the extent of 96.

XVII. 1807-20. ANNASWAMI SETUPATHI.

He was a minor at his accession. His minister was Thyagaraja Pillai who had served ably under his predecessor also. This reign is solely occupied by expensive litigation with Sivagami Natchiyar, daughter of No. XV above. She won the case and got possession of the Zemindari. However the British Government managed it till 1829.

XVIII. 1820-30. VIJAYA REGHUNATHA RAMASWAMI SETUPATHI.

Adopted son of the above but he got the estate only on 23-4-1829 and died soon after. He richly endowed the Rameswaram Temple. Both of his minor daughters died in a short time after him. His widow Parvadhavardhini Natchiyar claimed the estate. Her claim was established only in 1846.

1830-40. Muthuchella Thevar managed the estate during this period.

1840-46. The Court of Wards managed the estate during these six years, the East India Company being dissatisfied with the management of Muthu Chella Thevar.

XIX. 1846-62 RANEE PARVADHAVARDHINI NATCHIYAR SETUPATHI.

Widow of XVIII. She was distracted with two important protracted litigations instituted one by her mother-in-law and the other by her own adopted son. Her adopted son got the estate in 1862. She died later on in 1871. She richly endowed and established the Middle School, Paramakudi.

XX. 1862-73. MUTHU RAMALINGA SETUPATHI.

The estate was practicaliy managed from 1857-68 by the minister Ponnuswami Thevar. From 1871-73, tne Government had to take over the management into their own hands as the estate had fallen into larger arrears. The Setupathi died in 1873 leaving two minors.

XXI. 1873. BASKARA SWAMI SETUPATHI.

He was four years and four months old at the death of his father (No. XX). The estate was taken over by the Court of Wards between 1880-89. Mr. T. Raja Ram Rao was the Manager. He cleared the debt to the British Government. The estate was handed over to the Zemindar in 1889 with a surplus of 3½ lakhs of rupees. Under the able management of Mr. T. Raja Ram

Rao the income of the estate also rose from 5 to 9 lakhs of rupees annually.

XXII. RAJA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI *ALIAS* MUTHU RAMALINGA SETUPATHI.

He was born on 3rd June 1889. Though he studied in the S. P. G. High School, Ramnad, for a brief time, his earlier education was by private tuition imparted by the late Mr. Rajagopala Ayyar, a distinguished graduate. In 1901 he was sent to Madura for education and he joined the Setupathi High School first and then the Madura College. He accompanied his father to Delhi to attend Lord Curzon's Durbar.

In 1903, his father died and he was first under the guardianship of his uncle, the late Mr. P. Pandithoraiswami Thevar, the founder and President of the Madura Tamil Sangam. The then Collector was appointed as his guardian by the District Court. The estate which had been transferred to him even during the life-time of his father continued to be under the management of the Diwan Trustees who were either Government Officers or pensioners and whose administration was under the control of a committee consisting of such eminent men as the late Sir Seshayya Sastriyar, Diwan Bahadur Srinivasaraghava Aiyangar, Sir V. Bashyam Ayyangar, Diwan Bahadur T. Rajarathna Mudaliar, K. Krishnaswami Rao, etc., with the late Mr. Chentsal Rao and after him Mr. Venkaswami Rao as co-adjutors. To discharge the heavy liability of the estate brought about by the extravagance and over-generosity of his father, the estate was given a first mortgage to some European money-lenders and a loan of £ 175,000 was raised. The estate was also leased to Nattukottai Chetties for a

PLATE XIX.—Rajah B. Raja Rajeswara Sethupathi, Late Rajah Sahib of Ramnad

period of 20 years. With the appointment of the Collector as the guardian, Mr. K. Natesa Ayyar, M.A., L.T., now retired D. E. O., Trichinopoly, was appointed as tutor and after him Mr. Crossly who was also the tutor to His Highness the Rajah of Pudukkottah.

He married in 1908 and his first son was born in 1909. He was invited by Lord Ampthill, the then Governor of Madras, to be present during the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (now His Majesty the King-Emperor). Towards the close of 1909 he was sent back to Ramnad to learn revenue administration; and in June 1910 he attained his age of majority. Owing to serious failures on the part of the Chetty Lessees to keep up the terms of the contract, and in consideration of the neglect of and deterioration to the property, which manifested itself in an increasing degree, it was resolved to accept the surrender of the lease, which took place sometime at the close of 1911.

In December 1910, the Rajah took an extensive tour in the North of India and also visited the exhibition at Allahabad. In 1911, he was an invited guest of the Madras Government for the Coronation Durbar of Their Majesties the King and the Queen.

He was elected Life President of the Madura Tamil Sangam in 1913 and to the Madras Legislative Council unopposed in 1915. When the Council's time was extended and a re-election held, there was a farce of an opposition to his candidature, with the result that he secured 81 votes while the rival got 14. When the election of the Reformed Council came, he was again returned unopposed to the Legislative Council by the

South Indian Landholders Constituency. He was the senior Chairman of the Madras Legislative Council and has presided over its sittings on a few occasions recently.

He was a member of the Finance Committee, Road Board, and the Chairman of the Committee appointed to examine the Draft Amendment Bill of the Religious Endowment Act. He took an active part in the discussion over the Religious Endowment Bill and supported its main principles. He was a member of the Public Accounts Committee and of the Standing Advisory Committee of Public Works Department and Law and Municipal Department.

He was appointed as the President of the Ramnad District Board in 1920. He had been a nominated member of the Board for six years from 1911, the year in which the District Board was constituted. The District Board unanimously resolved seeking his re-nomination as President, District Board. He was re-nominated for another term in October 1923. He was also for six years the President of the District Secondary Education Board. Ramnad. He was the Vice-President of the South Indian Motor Union and continued to be a member of the Committee. He was also member of the Rameswaram and Kumbakonum Devasthanam Committees.

He was a Free Mason and was Master of Lodge Carnatic, Madras, two years ago.

He was Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Madras Provincial Conference held at Madura, and he presided at the Provincial Conference at Trichinopoly in 1919 and safely piloted the proceedings in spite of passion having run high over Punjab and allied topics. He presided at the S. I. L. F. annual gathering in Madras in

PLATE XX.—Rajah R. Shunmuga Rajeswara Naganatha Sethupathi, The Rajah Sahib of Ramnad.

January 1922 and in the month of August 1923 at Trichinopoly over the First Tamil Nadu Non-Brahmin Confederation. He had to control a disorderly crowd towards the end of the proceedings and he managed it well.

He was one of the senior Vice-Presidents of the Madras Landholders Association, and when the Maharajah of Bobbili, the President, resigned for a brief period, he stood the best chance of being elected the President.

He was made Honorary Lieutenant in 1918 and given the King's Commission along with a few other hereditary Rajahs and Zemindars.

He served on almost every important committee connected with the War work and besides being a monthly contributor of Rs. 500 for the Hospital Ship Fund and a lump sum of over Rs. 50,000 also presented an Aeroplane called "RAMNAD" to the War Department of His Majesty.

He died rather prematurely on the 4th of August 1928.

XXIII. SHUNMUGA RAJESWARA NAGANATHA SETHUPATHI THE PRESENT RAJAH SAHIB OF RAMNAD.

V

Conclusion.

This brief survey of the available facts regarding the history of the Setupathi dynasty shows that the traditional guardians of the Setu, whatever their political condition have been most attentive through many generations to the needs of the temple of Rameswaram

and of the pilgrims to the Setu. One of them (see No. VIII in 4) even perpetrated a domestic tragedy out of excessive zeal in this direction. By granting Dharmasanam villages to learned Brahmins and by making endowments and rich additions to the temple and by establishing choultries in various places on the roads from Madura and Tinnevelly, the Setupathies have been exhibiting a most loveable zeal in the discharge of the trust imposed on their ancestor by Sree Rama. Their zeal bears the legend *Ramanatha Sahayam.* These show how the whole of Ramnad from "*Sceptre and Crown to the Poor Crooked Scythe and Spade*" is permeated with the loving worship of Sree Ramanatha. The name of the Setupathies ever resounds in the aisles of the Rameswaram temple whenever "*the pealing anthem swells the note of praise*".

Suggestions have been thrown out in the chapters dealing with Rameswaram for the improvement of the conditions in the town and the provision of facilities to the pilgrims, and the living representative of the traditional guardians of Rama's bridge to whom along with his beloved deity this book is respectfully dedicated may add to "the store of merit" of his whole dynasty by working for the betterment of the place where it has pleased the Lord to choose a house for himself and for the better accommodation of those who "come from a far country for his great name's sake, and his mighty hand, and his outstretched arm" to pray in this house.

"OM."

APPENDIX A.

(Notice Issued by the Devastanam for the Guidance of the Pilgrims.)

Under the order of the High Court of Madras in Civil Revision Petition No. 65 of 1912, a scheme for the Management of the Rameswaram Devastanam was decreed, in accordance with which a Committee of the following Gentlemen was formed :—

1. M. R. Ry. R. Shunmuga Rajeswara Naganatha Setupathy Avergal, Raja of Ramnad.
2. M. R. Ry. AL. AR. RM. Narayanan Chettiyar Avergal, M.L.C. Zemindar's brother, Devakottah.
3. Rao Sahib M. R. Ry. S. A. Alagannan Chettiar Avergal, Bodinayakkanur.
4. M. R. Ry. K. Rama Ayengar Avergal, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Ex. M.L.A. Madura.
5. M. R. Ry. Kajana Lakshamana Rao Avergal.

1. The Committee has appointed a Trustee on Rs. 400 per mensem for the management of the Temple and the villages and other properties of the Devastanam. A Treasurer on Rs. 100 to 150 per mensem has also been appointed. He is the Chief Officer at Rameswaram, A Peishkar looks to the internal management of all abishekams and pujas for the Gods and Goddesses in the temple. The possession and management of all properties belonging to the Devastanam are vested in the Trustee appointed under the Scheme Decree.

2. The Government (as is understood by the word " Sircar ") has nothing to do with the management of the temple or otherwise and with the receipts of the Temple. The Temple Karuvelam (place where jewels are kept) is guarded by five police constables lent to the Devastanam by the Government and their salaries are paid to Government every month from the Devastanam funds.

3. The Local Pandas have nothing whatever to do with the management and the pujas of this Temple. The Priests are appointed as servants chosen from among the Maharashtra Brahmin caste on salaries decent for their living. The pilgrims who desire to know more about the management or any other particulars will be good enough to see the Treasurer.

4. Pilgrims who bring offerings for the God and Goddess in the shape of small gold or silver pieces such as Bilpatra, Trisulam, Umbrella, pieces of Gold and Silver and such other minor things will first show the same to the Peishkar who will issue a ticket to the pilgrim who will afterwards hand the same over to the priest of the temple in charge at the Sannadhi of God Ramanatha (Rameshwar) and other Sannadies (Mandirs). The priest will have the offerings placed at the feet of the God Rameswar and the Goddess (Parvathimayi) as the case may be and afterwards return it to the Peishkar to be brought to the temple account. The pilgrims may satisfy themselves whether this has been done.

5. Pilgrims who wish to make gifts of land, etc., or make any endowment will kindly see the Treasurer who will give the necessary instructions in the matter and final settlements will be made with the sanction of the Trustee.

6. Ganges water must be brought is metal vessels (iron or tin or glass vessels cannot be used). Those who bring water in glass bottles, iron or tin vessels will have to purchase metal vessel from the temple vessel-store room which is near the Eastern entrance of the third prakaram or from bazaar and the water shall have to be poured in the presence of the Peishkar in his Office who will satisfy himself that the water is genuine Ganges water brought from Prayag and Haridwar will be accepted. Gentlemen wishing to have their Ganges water poured on the God but who are unable to take it to Rameswaram can send the same in a metal vessel by parcel from any part of the country with their names, Gothras and Stars with a money order for Rs. 2 for each vessel; but if they want any abishekam to be done on particular days such as Mahasivarathri, they should take particular care to send them at least two weeks in advance. Any gentleman wishing to have a receipt will have to send one anna more for the same.

Pilgrims bringing Ganges water will have to see the Peishkar in his Office which is in the S.E. corner of the place where the Nandi Maharaj sits, and take a receipt or chit on payment of a fee of Rs. 2 for each vessel and go to the priest in charge of the temple who will have the water poured on the God. Such pouring of Ganges water takes place daily from early morning almost continuously till Sandal anointment (Sandanakkappu) during the Arthajama Abisheg, in the night time and on the Maha Sivaratri day, the whole day and night. For the convenience of those who do not bring Ganges water with them, Ganges water can be had from the Peishkar's Office in the temple. The quantity of Ganges water per Rupee is very nearly 1/16th Madras measure. In addition to this the pilgrim will have to pay a ticket fee

of Rs. 2 and also he must purchase a small vessel (new one) or a big vessel according to the quantity of Ganges water the pilgrims desire to buy. Thus he can fulfil his desire of performing Ganges water Abisheg to Rameswarji.

All the pilgrims may, if they choose to present any sum to the Gods or the Goddesses put the same into the Undial box, or Offertories kept at the entrance of each Sannadhi. The boxes are opened at the end of each month and the amount is credited in the Devastanam account. Pilgrims wishing to have the Abisheg of the Gods and the Goddesses in the temple will have to deposit the following amount according to the nature of the Abishegam the person desires to perform.

7. There are four kinds of *abisheg* at the following rates :—

Particulars.	Rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.
Ubayabhishegam with Prasadam	5	4	0
Ithara Ubayabhishegam (Chakkara Pongal)...	6	0	0
Ithara Ubayabhishegam with Prasadam ...	10	8	0
Panchamirtha abishegam with Prasadam ...	22	8	0
Rudrabhishegam with Prasadam ...	50	0	0

After the above abishegams are over, the person who does the abishegam will get some panchamirtha prasadam and prasadam (Tamarind food or Sakkara pongal) according to the nature of the abishegam. The *Boag* (prasadam) can be had from the Madapalli Moneigar who will duly check the abishega prasadam and distribute the same to the concerned persons and the pilgrims according to the rates specified in the temple office. The Madapalli is very near the outer entrance of the Ambal

Sannadhi (Goddess mandir). For Panchamirtha abishegam and Rudrabishegam Rs. 4 and Rs. 6 respectively worth of Ganges water is supplied from the temple stores.

8. Table of Ticket Charges is given below :—

	Particulars.	Rates. Rs.	A.	P.
1.	Ganges water abishega for each vessel ...	2	0	0
2.	The milk abishegam for one measure ...	1	8	0
3.	Sahasranama Archana (1008 namams) (with *vadai*, *payasam*) Nivadyam. Archanai fee Re. 1 Nivadyam Rs. 4 (Boghha of each Rs. 2)	5	0	0
4.	Thrisatha Archana (308 namams) with *payasam* Nivedyam, eight annas for one archana and Re. 1 for *payasam* Nivedyam ...	1	8	0
5.	Ashtothra archana (108 namams for each archana) ...	0	5	0
6.	For each cocoanut ...	0	1	0
7.	Ubayabishegam as detailed above ...	5	4	0
8.	Do. do. ...	6	0	0
9.	Ithara Ubayabishegam as detailed above.	10	8	0
10.	Panchamirtha abishegam as detailed above ...	22	8	0
11.	Rudrabishegam as detailed above ...	50	0	0
12.	Panchamurthi Utsavam ...	160	0	0
13.	Silver Car Utsavam ...	500	0	0

9. No charge is made for offering of flowers and garlands to the Gods and Goddesses. The pilgrims or persons who desire to do archanas and offer cocoanuts to Gods and Goddesses must purchase from the bazaar, camphor, betel-leaf, and areca-nuts, kunkumam and cocoanuts according to the number of archanas or cocoa-

nuts they wish to do and bring them along with them when they come to worship the Gods. **The abishekams, archanas, etc., can be performed only after obtaining the necessary tickets from the Peishkar's office by paying the ticket charges according to the perscribed rates.**

10. There are a number of gold and silver vahanams (see Appendix) of the God and the Goddess and also very valuable ornaments of the Gods and the Goddesses in this temple. Persons who wish to see them will have to pay a ticket fee of Rs. 5 for *vahanams* and a fee of Rs. 15 for jewels. This ticket amount, they should pay to the Peishkar after duly intimating the matter to the Treasurer with sufficient interval of time for taking them out.

Pilgrims should make dharisanam of the Spatika Linga of the God which can be seen only once in the early morning just when the sannadi of God Ramanatha is opened. Generally the proper time will be between 4-30 and 5-30 a. m. This time cannot be adhered to on festival days. They should also see the Palliari God and Goddess after the Arthajama Dheeparadhanai is over, when only the Dheeparathanai to this God and Goddess will take place.

11. There are *22* holy Theerthams inside this temple all round the *prakarams* in different places. Persons desirous of bathing in those Theerthams must bring vessels along with them and take water by means of that vessel and bathe. **Brahmins only are allowed to go to the Artha Mantapam.**

12. The above points are given to enable the pilgrims to have a general idea of the worship in the temple. More details can be had either from the Treasurer or from the Peishkar of this temple.

PLATE XXI.—Showing the exhibition of the valuable Jewelleries of the Rameswaram Temple during H. E. Lord Goshen's visit to the Temple in 1927. The late lamented Rajah Rajarajeswara Sethupathi is also seen along with His Excellency.

APPENDIX B.

The List showing the Theerthams in the Temple with their Respective positions.

1.	Mahalakshmi Theertham	....	Opposite to Hanuman Shrine.
2.	Gayatri ,,		From the outer main gate North, enter by the side of the Kartikaya Temple.
3.	Savitri ,,		
4.	Sarasvati ,,		
5.	Chakkra ,,	....	II. E. Corridor Middle
6.	Sanka ,,	....	II. Corridor North-East Corner.
7.	Gaya ,,		II. Corridor North side.
8.	Ganga ,,		
9.	Yamna ,,		
10.	Chandra ,,		
11.	Soorya ,,		
12.	Bramhahatya Vimochana Theertha	....	Back of Goddess Visalakshi or Annapurani in the II. Corridor, North side.
13.	Siva Theertha	....	South of Maha Nandi Mantap.
14.	Sadhyamirtha Theertha	....	Navasakthi Mantap or Sukravara Mantap. Front of Goddess Temple.

15.	Madhava Theertham	....	North of South Corridor.
16.	Nala „		Sethu Madhava compound West III. Corridor.
17.	Neela „		
18.	Gavaya „		
19.	Gavaksha „		
20.	Gandamadhana „		
21.	Sarva Theertham	....	I. Corridor in the God's Temple Eastern wing.
22.	Kodi Theertham	....	I. Corridor in the God's Temple, North to the left of Annapurani Temple.

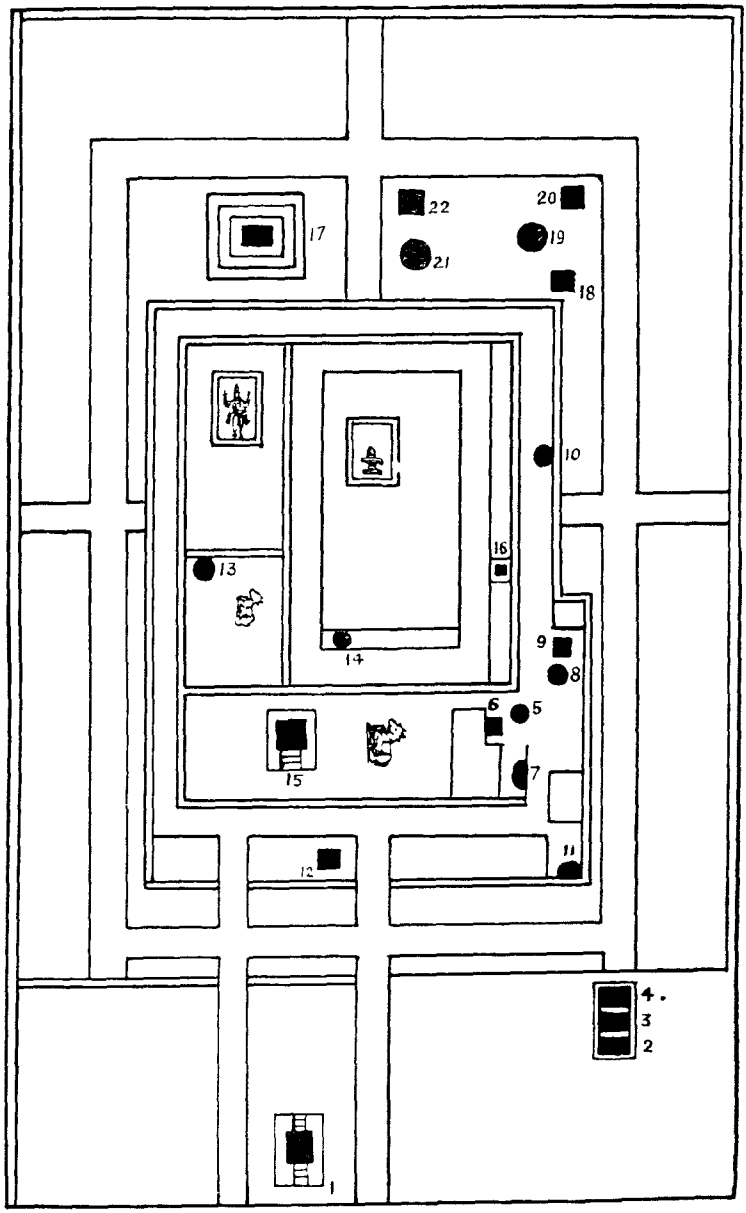

PLATE XXII.—Showing the localities of the various Thirthams in the Rameswaram Temple

APPENDIX C.

The List of Chattrams and Choultries from Pamban to Dhanushkodi (In the Island).

Name of Chattram.	Where situated.	Charges, if any.	No. of days one can stay.	Any other information.
1. Ahalya Bhai choultry ...	Rameswaram.			Meals free—day time.
2. Agnitheertham Bungalow ...	do.	Rs. 2 per day.		Accommodation only.
3. Baghavandas Pakla Chattram ...	do.			do.
4. Chockalingam Chettiar's Chatram ...	do.			do. & freeding to Byragees.
5. Cochin Rajah's Chattram ...	do.			Freeding 4 brahmins—day time.
6. Dewan Bahadur Kasturchand Chattram.	do.			Accommodation only.
7. Edayamadam ...	do.			do.
8. Gosayee Mutt ...	do.			do.
9. Gorakshanasala ...	do.			do.
10. His Holiness, the Jagadguru's Mutt Sringeri ...	do.			do. to Brahmin Saints.
11. Hindustani Mutt ...	do.			Accommodation only.
12. Jembu Raja's Choultry ...	do.			do.
13. Kondeswaramadam ...	do.			do.
14. Komuttis Chattram ...	do.			do.
15. Konganeer Mutt ...	do.			do.
16. Kalyani Ammal's Choultry ...	do.			Meals free—day time.
17. Kannammal's Choultry ...	do.			do.
18. Kaikkalayar Mutt ...	do.			Accommodation only.

APPENDIX C—(*Continued*).

The List of Chattrams and Choultries from Pamban to Dhanushkodi (In the Island)—(Continued).

Name of Chattram.	Where situated.	Charges, if any.	No. of days one can stay.	Any other information.
19. Karvetnagar Rajah's Choultry. ...	Rameswaram.			Meals free—day time.
20. Kalahasti Rajah's Choultry ...	do.			do.
21. Local Fund Choultry ...	Pamban.			Feeding all both day and night.
22. Maniclal Choultry ...	Rameswaram.			Accommodation only.
23. Mathura Dasmanji Maghji Batya Dharmasala ...	do.			do.
24. Mohabeer Dharmasala ...	do.			Accommodation free.
25. Narayana Pillai's Choultry ...	do.			Meals free—day time.
26. Nallapperumal Reddiar's Choultry ...	do.			Accommodation.
27. Palaya Nattar's Mutt ...	do.			No meals.
28. Narasimha Pandither's Choultry ...	do.			Meals free—day time.
29. Nagaraviduthi ...	do.			Accommodation to Nagarathars.
30. Ramnad Maharajah's Choultry ...	Pamban.			Accommodation only.
31. Ramnad Maharajah's Choultry ...	Rameswaram.			Meals free—Night time.
32. Rest House ...	Pamban.			Accommodation only.
33. Reddiar's Mutt ...	Rameswaram.			do.
34. Ramamandiramadam ...	do.	Rs. 5 per day.		do.
35. Somasundarathambiran's Chattram ...	do.			do.
36. Subramania Pillai's Choultry ...	do.			do.
37. Siva Palks Pakla Chattram ...	do.			do.

PLATE XXIII .—Showing the Sri Kothanda Ramaswami Koil between Rameswaram and Dhanushkodi in one of its festival days.

38.	Senthilal Mutt. ...	do.		Accommodation only.
39.	Satyanarayana Mutt ...	do.		do.
40.	Sourashtra Mutt ...	do.		Accommodation to Sourashtrars only.
41.	Subbarayan Chettiar's Choultry ...	do.		
42.	Thangachimadam Choultry ...	Thangachimadam.		Accommodation only.
43.	Thulasi Bava Mutt ...	Rameswaram.		do.
44.	Thiruppanandal Mutt ...	do.		Meals free—day time.
45.	Tanjore Rajah's Choultry ...	do.		Meals free—Night time.
46.	Do. ...	Dhanushkodi.		Meals free both day and night.
47.	Traveller's Bungalow ...	do.	Rs. 1-8 and Re. 1 per day.	Accommodation only.
48.	Tiruppani Bangalow ...	Rameswaram.		do.
49.	Thakker Jethi Bhoolchand Meghsee ...	do.		do.
50.	Udayanayakapuram Choultry ...	Thangachimadam.		Meals free.
51.	Uttarathi Mutt ...	Rameswaram.		Accommodation only.
52.	Veerapperumal Pillai's Choultry ...	do.		Meals free—day time.
53.	Venkatrow's Choultry ...	do.		do.
54.	Venkatagiri Rajah's Choultry ...	do.		
55.	Veeyana Ravanna Choultry ...	do.		Accommodation.
56.	Do. ...	Dhanushkodi.		Accommodation and Meals.
57.	Water shed and Chattram (Subramaniar Koil West Tower ...	do.		Meals to 5 Brahmins free (Night time.
58.	Alagannan Chettiar's Choultry ...	Kothanda Raman Koil.	Free	Accommodation, SadhavartiMeals.
59.	Tiruppananthal Mutt ...	do.		Accommodation, Meals night 8 persons,
60.	Devakotta P. S. A. R. Arunachalam Chettiar ...	do.		Buttermilk, Watershed.

APPENDIX D.

Brief notes regarding some other interesting places in the Ramnad District.

1. **Ramnad** :—The capital of the Setupathies of the Ramnad Zemindari. On his return from Lanka Rama is said to have bathed at Dhanushkodi for, purification from the sin of killing Ravana *who was a Brahmin*, and to have dedicated a Linga which he worshipped and named Ramanathaswami. The town of Ramnad is said to have derived its name from this God.

"This town formerly went by the name of the Mugavainagaram, as it is supposed to have been built on the site of the old town of that name. According to the Sthalapuranam of the Dharbhasayanam or Tiruppullani Temple, situated at a distance of six miles from Ramnad and the Agneyapurana—a sacred work, Rama is said to have given orders to one Guha, the King of the hunters, one of his followers, to build a town near the mouth or the entrance to the Setu, the sea then extending close up to Ramnad. The town was accordingly built and it went by the name of Mugavainagaram or entrance town."

"The town and its suburb sincluding Lakshmipuram a village to the east, are about 2½ square miles."

The old square fort built by the Setupathies is now in ruins which can still be seen in the south-western corner of the town.

"In the centre of the fort stands the royal palace of the Rajah surrounded by high masonry walls. In

PLATE XXIV.—Showing the beautiful front view of the Ramnad Maharajah's Palace.

Ramalinga Vilasam is exhibited the famous battle between the Rajahs of Tanjore and Ramnad". There is also to be seen the **sacred stone** on which the first Setupathi is said to have been crowned by Rama himself.

The description of *the Palace at Ramnad* by Mr. T. B. Krishnaswami M.A., B.L., District Educational Officer of Ramnad will be found interesting.

"An old-time city is Ramnad, were unhasting, unresting, the people move about their business in the leisurely way, that has become a rare sight in these recent days. Drive down the dusty road and wind along its curves and undulations, you move betwixt sheets of water in large and lovely tanks and reach the Elephant gate which leads into the palace of the Setupathies. Radiantly illuminated at seasons of festivity with many coloured lights, it stands out clear and bright in delicacy of outline and simplicity of colour design. You would not suspect that on the first floor, there is an up-to-date Billiards Room, where that keen sportsman the Rajah revels and reigns supreme.

Go past the gate and as you sweep down the path in state, you come into the portico of Ramalinga Vilas.

"**Ramalinga Vilas**" is a very ancient structure built in Moorish style with Byzantine arches, and—on windows!

The walls washed with yellow paint, contain rare pictures of historic importance, recording old time amities and alliances, many "far-off things and battles long ago". As you pass by the left wing, you come upon a crude platform surmounted by a square block of rude uncarved stone without canopy or other mark of state. This is the stone, that like the other at Scone

and now at Westminster Abbey, kings sit on when they are crowned. Its rude crude appearance is proof of at once of its sanctity and antiquity. Further on and more towards the centre, under a magnificent canopy is the Durbar seat of the Rajah, where he sits in state and receives as the vicegerent of Sri Rama, the homage of the proudest Hindu Kings, from Nepal and Bhutan, to Mysore and Travancore."

There are two chattrams. One is in Lakshmipuram (in the eastern part of the town) belonging to the Rajah Sahib. This is a large one and affords relief to pilgrims on a large scale. The other is in the town near the important temples and the fresh water tank called Mugava Oorani. It was built by an old Queen of Ramnad—called Muthuveerayee Natchiyar. Pilgrims who wish to visit Navapashanam and Dharbhasayanam will find these chattrams a convenient halting place. Besides the above there is a Rest house or a Dawk Bungalow near the Railway station and there is also a choultry of a pious gentleman Mr. K. V. Swaminatham Chettiyar of Palavangudy.

There are two High Schools—Schwartz and the Rajah's High School—and two Government Training Schools.

2. **Devipatnam.**—About ten miles to the north-east of Ramnad. This is otherwise known as Navapashanam. It contains an old temple of Mahishasura Mardhani Devi in the southern part. The nine upright Stones representing the planets are in the bay.

There is a large chattram belonging to the Raja Sahib in which travellers are fed. There is also a private chattram belonging to the Rameswaram Committee member M. R. Ry. Khajana Lakshman Row of Madura.

A musjid, a temple of Siva, and another of Vishnu are also to be found here.

The majority of the population are Mussalmen. The port has a considerble number of boats which carry merchandise and passengers to and from Pamban and Negapatam, etc. The town has a Post Office.

3. **Tiruppullani.**—(Dharbhasayanam). A pleasant village 6 miles to the south of Ramnad. Three miles to the south of this is the Adi-Setu which the Vaishnavites look upon as Setu and Dhanushkodi Theertham.

There is a large Vishnu temple here dedicated to Adi-jagannatha. His consort is known as Padmasani. There is in the same temple a large shrine in which the figure of Rama is shown lying on a couch of sacred grass (*Dharbha*) while thinking of the means of transporting his army to Lanka. The figure of Samudra (Oceans) is also shown in a corner. The temple has inscriptions of Chola Udayar dated about 1375 A.D.

There is a large chattram belonging to the Travancore Government in which pilgrims are fed. There is another spacious and convenient choultry for Brahmins built in the last century by some Madhava Brahmin.

There is also a fine building here called Vellayan Servaigar chattram maintained by the Ramnad Taluk Board. Here. with the permission of the Taluk Board authorities the visitors can find good accommodation. This is in front of the Chakkra Theertha east bank.

The pious pilgrim will of course feel grateful to us for inserting what Mr. T. B. Krishnaswami M.A., B.L., District Educational Officer, Ramnad, has written about "Shrines associated with Rameshwar."

He begins thus.—"The ordered course of orthodoxy prescribes that the pilgrim to Rameswar should proceed to Uppur in the Tiruvadanai taluq, propitiate God Ganesha —lord of the hosts of elements, and averter of evil—and so ensured of the safety of the journey and prosperity of his venture, arrive at Devipatnam, ten miles north-east of Ramnad.

The ancient coast-town has acquired its sanctity from the nine pillars set in the sea-beach to serve as the nine planets having power over human destiny. It is also called *navapashanam* or the nine stones. The sea about this spot is quite calm, being rather shallow near the shore. The pious pilgrim draws on the sands the diagram of a bow and an arrow, picks a handful of earth therefrom and throwing it into the sea, with cocoanuts and other offerings, takes a bath. He goes nine times, clockwise round the pillars by way of averting the sinister influence of "the stars"; those who want to exhibit extra zeal go a hundred and eight times and desperadoes in religion—"the bulls" of ritual and ceremonious worship—do it a thousand and eight times.

Tradition has it that Sri Rama established these pillars and propitiated the planets to avert their "disaster" or evil influence. The goddess *Uma* or *Parvati* is also believed to have destroyed a demon here. The net result or residuum of these stories, when the chaff is blown off, is that at this spot a victory was won over the flesh and over evil powers. What one man accomplished here, another might achieve and in matters of the spirit, such a precedent is most inspiring. So it comes to pass that this solitary seacoast town, with little else to commend itself to pious regard, beyond the sunrise and the stars of the night, the shrill night wind and the

spread—out splendour of the sea, has come to stand for much in the history of the soul, with a sanctity all its own and serving through hundreds of years, as a spiritual centre of rare inspirational force and effect.

From Devipatnam, one proceeds, *via* Ramnad and Rameswar, to Dhanushkoti, to the toe of the boot that forms Rameswar island. From heel Rameswar on the north, to the toe Dhanuskoti on the south, the distance is fifteen miles. Twelve miles are covered by rail-road and a few furlongs to the east is the Dhanushkoti pier. Two steamers with red funnels ride at anchor on either side of the pier and the railway line stretching to the very end affords a delicious sense of hovering in mid air with the blue waves of the sea rising and falling, foaming and dashing below us.

The Bathing ghat lies two miles away, across water-logged lagoons in wet weather and heavy sand in hot weather. There at the very end of the island, the quiet waters of the Bay mingle with the boisterous waters of the Ocean. The pilgrim is required to bathe in the calm waters first and in the rough waters next. Cocoanuts and coins are flung as propitiatory offerings and these the local fishermen pick up promptly. Apart from the bracing and purifying sea-bath, the spot is sanctified as that from which the bridge was laid to Ceylon. Nothing of it is seen now. Sri Rama himself after the defeat of Ravana, scratched out a part of the bridge with one end of his bow (hence Dhanushkoti) at the request of Vibhishna—the newly installed king of Ceylon, who desired to be safe from inroads from the mainland of India. A subsequent subsidence of that part of the earth has more or less submerged the rest of the bridge and all we are able to see, as far as the eye can reach are merely

gleaming glittering waves, rising and falling and flowing endlessly and for ever.

The pilgrim passes from Dhanushkoti to Kothandaramaswami Temple about five miles from Dhanushkoti Station. Vibhishna was honoured here, as Hanuman the monkey-general was honoured later at Manamadura.

Within two miles of Rameswar is Ghandamadhana Parvatham, a two storeyed mantapam where the footprints of Sri Rama are worshipped. Ahalya turned to stone and Nahusha to a snake, were both restored to human form at the touch of Sri Rama's sacred feet in other parts of India. Here Sri Rama stood and spoke to the monkey hosts before marching them out on the great expedition.

The baths of Rameswar further purify the pilgrim and he goes to Ramnad to see the Setupathi on his *Setu pidam*. The next place to go to is Tirupullanai *or Dharbasayanam*, the place where Sri Rama underwent austere penances before undertaking his arduous task of conquering Ravana. The elaborate preparations on the part of Sri Rama are so many hints pointing to the allegorical aspect of Sri Rama's story. As all rivers flow towards the ocean, all virtues flowed towards Rama. He was the embodiment of all virtue. His conquest of the ten-headed monster was the victory of the pure soul against the many-headed monster of evil.

The allegorical interpretation does not negative or come in conflict with the historic or literary aspect of Rama's story. On the other hand it adds to the infinite variety of its appeal, the many—sided beauty of the character and the incidents—pictorial, dramatic, artistic, allegorical, ethical, historical, religious and the rest—

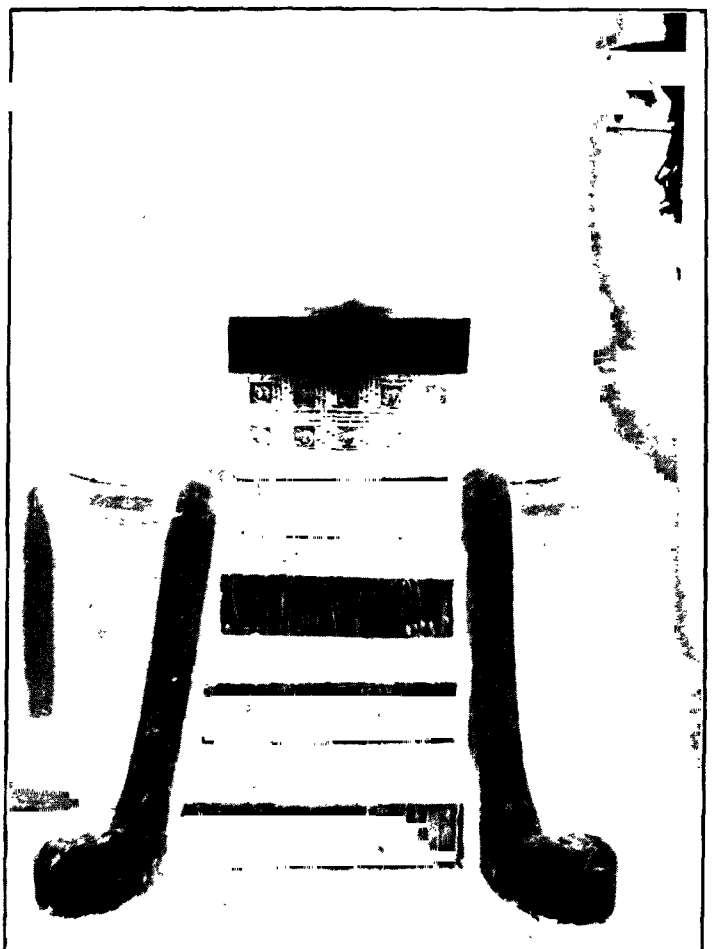

PLATE XXV.—Showing the 'Sacred Stone' on which the Sethupathis are annointed and pious pilgrims worship this Stone in Sacred Memory of Sree Rama.

yielding each time the Epic is read, a fresh delight, as of a new discovery, a strange and till—then unapprehended glory and thrill of ecstasy.

The bathing-ghat of Tirupullanai is eight miles south-east of Ramnad. For over seven miles the road lies through a barren tract almost devoid of vegetation, except the familiar *babul, acacia* and palmyra palm. But nearer the sea, the vegetation rapidly improves, becomes luxuriant. Large shade-giving avenue-trees make a cloister of the road and cool cocoanut—groves lead on to

"The moving waters and at their priestly task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores."

Behold the glittering waves of ocean radiantly smiling in the first light of the dawn and casting about the gold of the sunlight from one to another in sheer wantonness and joy, till the whole aspect is one of radiant rich resplendence!

Notice as you return, the white marble image of Sage Agasthya in a wayside shrine under the sacred. Aswatha or Pipal tree, *Ficus Religiosa.*

Then the famous Vishnu shrine of Tirupullanai, is reached, a temple rightly famed for its beauty, its loveliness, its sanctity. The large lovely tank in which the temple tower is with delicate grace clearly reflected, the tower itself many centuries old, and the sacred Aswatha tree, old as Truth and certainly coeval with the temple, these are special attractions.

Tradition has it that Lord Jaganath (Lord of the Earth, manifested himself here with his divine consorts *Padmasani* (Luxmi, on the lotus) and *Bhudevi* (the

Goddess of the Earth) to Pullamarishi celebrated for his austerities. A temple was built to commemorate the sacred incident. The sanctity so acquired, of the spot, must have been its recommendation to Sri Rama, to perform here his penances lying on *Kusa* or *Dharba* grass whence the place is called *Dharbasayanam* or the bed of grass. It is related in the Ramayana—and that circumstance is proof enough of the antiquity of the shrine—that Sri Rama, finding the sea boisterous, propitiated the God of the Seas by penances austere. The Sea-god was strangely indifferent. The incensed *Avatar* of Vishnu let fly his angry arrow. At once the sea knew its lord, grew calm and the bridge was built. The Sea must have receded since, for the temple is at least three miles away from the coast and this could not have been in the days of Sri Rama, as the penances would be pointless, performed so far away from the sea-board. A splendid shrine is dedicated to the reclining image of Sri Rama and this is the second within the sacred precincts.

The angry aspect of the god was a matter of dread to the people at large and a considerate Setupathi, set up therefore a third shrine, dedicated to Sri Rama triumphant, representing his coronation at *Ayodya*. It is said Sri Rama after he had slain *Ravana* and recovered *Sita*, took her over the spots where he had wandered in solitude, seeking her. He is reported to have shown her the *Aswatha* tree. The establishment of the shrine of *Pattabirama* or *Sri Rama crowned*, serves a twofold purpose. It shows the soft and gentle aspect of one, who is represented in another part of the temple in an aspect fierce as the world—destroying fire. It draws attention to the happy conclusion to the great epic.

Valmiki speaks of Sri Rama as one who was patient as the Earth, but provoked, fierce as fire. We see him here in both the aspects. With the coronation the story comes to a happy end. So does the pilgrimage with this crowning fact or circumstance, to the childless is the hope of a child and unto all, the dearest wish of their heart. God is doubtless omnipresent. But if particular spots, have by reason of traditionary association with religious history, acquired a sanctity with which their very atmosphere is filled and of which they are redolent, Tirupullanai by its antiquity and sanctity, its unceasing popularity and religious efficacy is doubtless an abode of the gods in a special sense of the term.

As sculptural glories of Tirupullanai temple must be mentioned the reclining colossal image of Sri Rama,—with Brahma and the whole host of gods, blossoming out of a sort of umblical cord starting from the navel and branching out into three—and the pierced windows, enclosing the shrine of *Garudalwar*, the Eagle, in front of Sri Jaganadha's shrine. Flaws in the stone, or fracture by careless workmanship would have made shortwork of these elaborate pieces of art and condemned and consigned to obscurity, works which fortunately stand out by reason of rare merit and rare good fortune, as monuments of the sculptor's skill and piety.

One tears himself away unwillingly from the lovely spot and following the course of the epic story reaches Manamadura, known of old as *Vanaravira Madura* or the spot where the monkey-general Hanuman was honoured. Beyond the beauty of the Vaigai rolling on its bed in floodtime grandeur, with plenty of foam-bells on its broad front, beyond the beauty of the new bridge spanning it gracefully from end to end, the only attraction is an old temple, in a state of considerable disrepair.

From here, the tale of Sri Rama passes out of the District, and the places graced by Him and associated with His Sacred history, cease." *(Pictorial Tour through Ramnad.)*

4. **Tiruotharacosamangai.**—Seven miles south-west of Ramnad. There is a famous temple of of Mangaleswara Swami containing inscriptions of Pandya and Madura Nayak dynasties, and beautifully sculptured. In the *Sthalapuranam*, it is said that Siva taught a certain *mantra* to his consort Parvati. She forgot it and he grew angry and cursed her to become a mortal. She was born at Bogalore (see No. 5 below) and Siva also was born as a Brahmin and married her and re-taught her the mantra. (*Tiru—holy, uttaram—answer, cosa—veda, mangai—woman*).

Pilgrims resorting to Rameswaram, on their way home, as a rule visit this place on account of its sacredness.

5. **Bogalore.**—Ten miles to the west of Ramnad. This was the capital of Ramnad till about 1700 when Kilavan Setupathi (see No. VII among the later Setupathies in Chapter X) shifted the capital to Ramnad. The inhabitants of this town still have the right of conferring the title of Setupathi on the Rajahs of Ramnad. They claim to be of the original stock from which the guardian of the Bridge was selected first by SriRama. There is a large chattram belonging to the Samasthanam. The town is on the Madura-Ramnad road.

The temple and town are said to have been built by Parakrama Pandya out of gratitude for being freed on that spot from the sin of Brahmicide (Brahmahatya).

PLATE XXVI —Showing the 'Ganesh' Temple at Uppoor—where the preliminary worship of a pious pilgrim begins.

6. **Tiruchuli.**—The town is called *Tiruchuligai* or *Aavartanapuram.* The name refers to its having been saved from being sucked into the earth by a whirlpool formed suddenly during a deluge. Siva lifted it upon the point of his trident. *Maalini* the daughter of a Chera King was cured of a devil by worshipping God here. There are some famous holy *Theerthams* here. *Sula-Theertham* (formed with the trident by Siva himself), *Koti Theertham* (said to have been dug by Arjuna with the point of his *Gandeeva*). *Bhoomi Theertham* (associated with the name of the God in the *Dwapara* age) and *Thrilochana Theertham.*

7. **Pallimadam.**—(Place of rest—Tamil *Palli*—sleep). 44 miles to the north-west of Ramnad. The place is so called because the three famous saivite saints—*Appar. Sundarar* and *Manikkavasagar* took rest here on their return from Rameswaram. Siva appeared to them here riding on a bull. Hence the God here is called *Tirukkalanather* (Tamil *kaalai*—a bull).

8. **Nainarkoil.**—Seventeen miles to the north-west of Ramnad. The population largely consists of Muhammadans. A dumb Muhammadan girl recovered her speech by worshipping Siva here, who is known as Naganathaswami. *Adi Sesha* first worshipped him. Hence the name. The Muhammadans call the God "*Nainar*" The Father.

9. **Uppoor.**—Twenty miles north by east of Ramnad. It is a small village and has a choultry maintained by Nattukottai Chetties. It has a temple of Ganesa known as VEYYILUGANATHA VINAYAKAR. Rama is said to have established him as a preliminary to his construction of the Setu. From here he proceeded to Navapashanam.

10. **Devakottah.**—Is the seat of the Zemindar of Devacottah. It is full of Nattukottai Chetties who have built a very big temple of Siva therein. Its suburb Puthur contains a very big choultry.

11. **Tiruvadanai.**—(Adu—a goat, Anai—an elephant in Tamil). A man called Varunayaraja worshipping Siva here got rid of the monstrous form of a goat-headed elephant into which he had been formerly cursed by some sage. The God here is therefore called *Adanainathan.*

12. **Theethandathanam.**—Contains a very old temple said to have been restored in this Yuga. The God was known by various names in the various ages but now he is known as "Sarvateertham Udayavar". (*The Lord of all holy theerthams*).

APPENDIX E.

Authoritative passages from various sacred works in Sanskrit (regarding the antiquity and importance of the Setu and of Rameswaram).

The following extracts have been taken from the Vedas, Itihasas, Puranas, Smritis and later poetry. They are all translated with a few comments here and there.

I. THE VEDAS (SRUTI).

1. *The Rig Veda.* (X Mandala, Sukta 3, Stanza 3).

(१) भद्रो भद्रया सचमान आगात् स्वसारम् जारो अभ्येति पश्चात् ।
सुप्रकेतैर्द्युभिरग्निर्वितिष्ठन् रुशद्भिर्वर्णैरभिरामम स्थात् ॥

The Nirukta for the above stanza is as follows :—

भद्रो रामभद्रः भद्रया मंगलरूपया सीतया सचमानः सम्पद्यमानः वासमन्तात् अगात् पितुर्नियोगवशात् अरण्यमगात् । जारः परदारहर्ता रावणः स्वसारम् मातृवत्पूज्याम् जगन्मातरम् सीताम् पश्चात् अभ्येति अरण्यगमनादनन्तरम् समीपे आगतवान् अनन्तरम् सेतुबन्धनद्वारा रावणे हते सीतायाश्च अग्नौ प्रविष्टायाम् विश्वासार्थम् अग्निः ताम् गृहीत्वा रामम् रघुनाथम् अभि आभिमुख्येन अस्थात् शुद्धेत्यभिनिवेदितवान् ततः सुप्रकेतैः सकलार्चिर्हारिभिः रुशद्भिः कमनीयैः वर्णैः आकारविशेषैः चैवं वितिष्ठन् विशेषेण स्थितवान् इति ॥

(Bhadra *(Ramabhadra)* together with Bhadra *(the auspicious featured Seeta)* went about *(the forests in accordance with the word of his father).* The lewd *(Ravana)* approached the mother after *(the going to the forest). (Thereafter Ravana being killed through the*

construction of the Ocean-Bridge and Seeta entering the Pyre).

Again *(took her up and)* came before Rama *to testify to her purity).* Then he shone greatly with exceeding brightness in five colours (forms).

Sayana gives the following explanation :—

भद्रो भजनीयः कल्याणो भद्रया भजनीयया दीप्त्या उषसा वा सचमानः सेव्यमानः संगच्छमानो वा अग्निरागात् अजगाम गार्हपत्यादा हवनीयमागच्छति ततः पश्चात् जारो जरयिता शत्रूणाम् सोग्निः स्वसारम् स्वयम् सारिणीम् भगिनीम् वा आगतामुपसमभ्येति अभिगच्छति तथा सुपत्केतैः सुपज्ञानैः द्युभिः दीप्तैः तेजोभिः सह वितिष्ठन् सर्वतोवर्तमानः सोऽग्निः रुशद्भिः श्वेतैः वर्णैः वारकैः आत्मीयैः तेजोभिः रामम् कृष्णम् शार्वरम् तमोऽभ्यस्थात् सायं होमकाले अभिभूय तिष्ठति ॥

(The worshipful and auspicious Agni together with his auspicious lustre (or with the Dawn) proceeded from the Garhapatya (fire-place) to the Ahavaneeya (fire-place). Then the destroyer of enemies (Agni) goes near the approaching dawn (or his sister the dawn). In the same manner shedding brilliant radiance all round the fire with his brightening rays goes near the darkness (of the night) at the time of the evening oblation.)

Both the interpretations seem to be extremely far-fetched. Still, Sayana's interpretation is favoured by the fact that the whole hymn deals with the relation of the sacrificial fire to the night, the Sun and the Dawn. His interpretation of the word "*Rama*" as indicating the "dark night" seems to be very far-fetched. The Nirukta interpretation is greatly influenced by the Ramayana and bases itself on the one word "Rama."

One thing is clear at any rate. The author of the Nirukta was well aware of the Rama story and is also imbued with a sense of its holiness.

2. *Taittireeya Samhita* or *Krishna Yajur Veda.*

(III. Kanda, Prasna 2, Anuvaka 2, Stanza 1).

(२) द्वौ समुद्रौ वितता वजूर्यौ पर्यावर्तेते जठरेव पादाः ।
तयोः पश्यन्तो अतियन्त्यमपश्यन्तः सेतुनातियन्त्यन्यम् ॥

These vessels (Putabhrit and Ahavaneeya) are spacious like unto two peas and are never dry. They are used alternately in quick succession like the waves in the womb of the ocean. One of them is reached (handled); being visible. The other being hidden (by a needa 'nest' brush holy grass, placed on the first) is reached by means of a ladle (which resembles a ship that carries you over the waters).

So far, the commentator. The stanza immediately following, speaks of the sun as having two garments one dark and the other bright. This also is interpreted as a simile for the two sacrificial cups Putabhrit and Ahavaneeya. But with due deference to tradition which lends to become authoritative, one feels that the poetry of these stanzas has been lost in the queer interpretation. The first stanza might have contemplated merely the commingling of two vast sheets of water and the Poet might have lost himself in the mystery of driving the farther shore of the vaster of the two sheets of water.

Two seas expansive and imperishable.
Chase each other like the feet in a womb ;
One of them can be spanned by the eye :
The other cannot be seen but has to be spanned by means of a bridge.

The stanza is obviously symbolical, but it is doubtful if the traditional interpretation is the best.

But the propriety of the word "*Setu*" whether taken with the sacrificial cups or with night is not quite clear. It seems to be appropriate only to a sea or lake. In this case difficulty arises as to the significance of the words "*Pasyantah*" and "*Apasyantah.*"

All that this passage enables us to know is that the word Setu was in use in the time of the Yajur Veda. Its exact significance is not clear. Further, there is also the possibility that the poet was contemplating the commingling of two vast sheets of water.

II. ITIHASAS.

3. *Vaalmeeki's "Ramayana."*

(Yuddhakanda 126. 20-1.)

एतत्तु दृश्यते तीर्थं सागरस्यमहात्मनः ।
सेतुबन्ध इतिख्यातम् त्रैलोक्येनाभिपूजितम् ॥
एतत् पवित्रम् परमम् महापातकनाशनम् ।
अत्र पूर्वम् महादेवः प्रसादमकरोत्प्रभुः ॥

(Here is seen the holy place in the great ocean which is well known as the Setubandha and worshipped by the three worlds. This is extremely holy and destroys great sins. Here formerly the Lord Mahadeva (Siva) was pleased to show favour to me).

These are the words of Rama to his beloved on their return from Lanka in the aerial car—Pushpaka. The passage looks like an interpolation in as much as Rama could not have spoken of his own work of a few days before as already worshipped by the people of the three

worlds, unless we think it was spoken by an anticipatory rush of thought.

The Mahadeva must refer to the Rameswara linga. It is to be noted that this our earliest reference to the Setubandha, does not talk of the sin of Brahmahatya in killing Ravana, or of Rama and Lakshmna getting down from the Vimana to wash their matted locks in the Jatai Theertha or of Rama and Seeta establishing the linga of sand, etc, etc.

Vaalmeeki's Ramayana. Yuddhakanda (Canto 22. Slokas 51-75).

ततो विसृष्टा रामेण सर्वतो हरियूथपाः ।
अभिपेतुर्महारण्यम् दृष्टाः शतसहस्रशः ॥
ते नगान्नगसंकाशाः शाखामृगगणर्षभाः ।
बभञ्जुर्वानरास्तत्र प्रचकर्षुश्च सागरम् ॥
ते सालैश्चाश्वकर्णैश्च धवैर्वेशैश्चवानगाः ।
कुटजैरर्जुनैस्तालैस्तिलकैस्तिनिशैरपि ॥
विल्वैश्चसप्तपर्णैश्च कर्णिकारैस्तुपुष्पितैः ।
चूतैश्चाशोकवृक्षैश्च सागरम् समपूरयन् ॥
समूलांश्च विमूलांश्च पादपान् हरिसत्तमाः ।
इन्द्रकेतूनिवोद्यम्य प्रजहुर्हरयस्तरून् ॥
तालान् दाडिमगुल्मांश्च नारिकेलान् विभीतकान् ।
वकुलान् खदिराञ्निम्बान् समाजहुस्समन्ततः ॥
हस्तिमात्रान्महाकायाः पाषाणांश्च महाचलाः ।
पर्वतांश्च समुत्पाट्य यन्त्रैः परिवहन्तिच ॥
प्रक्षिप्यमाणैः शैलैः सहसा जलमुद्धतम् ।

समुत्पतित माकाशमपासर्पत्ततस्ततः ॥
समुद्रं क्षोभयामासु र्वानराश्च समन्ततः ।
सूत्राण्यन्ये प्रगृह्णन्ति व्यायतम् शतयोजनम् ॥
दण्डानन्ये प्रगृह्णन्ति विचिन्वन्ति तथापरे ।
दशयोजनविस्तारम् शतयोजनमायतम् ॥
नळश्चक्रे महासेतुं मध्ये नदनदीपतेः ।
स तथा क्रियते सेतुर्वानरै र्घोरकर्मभिः ॥
वानराश्शतश स्तत्र रामस्याज्ञापुरस्सराः ।
मेघाभैः पर्वताग्रैश्चतृणैः काष्ठै र्वबन्धिरे ॥
पुष्पिताग्रैश्चतरुभिः सेतुं बध्नन्ति वानराः ।
पाषाणां श्चगिरिप्रख्यान् गिरीणां शिखराणिच ॥
दृश्यन्ते परिधावन्तो गृह्यकारणसन्निभाः ।
शिलानां क्षिप्यमाणानां शैलानाश्चनिपात्यतां ॥
बभूव तुमुलः शब्दः तदा तस्मिन्महोदधौ ।
कृतानि प्रथमे नाह्ना योजनानि चतुर्दश ।
प्रहृष्टै र्गजसंकाशै स्त्वरमाणैः प्लवङ्गमैः ॥
द्वितीयेन तथा चाह्ना योजनानि तु विंशतिः ।
कृतानि प्लवगै स्तूर्णं भीमकायैर्महाबलैः ॥
अह्ना तृतीयेन तथा योजनानि कृतानि च ।
त्वरमाणैर्महाकाये रेकविंशतिरेव च ॥
चतुर्थेन तथा चाह्ना द्वाविंशतिरथापि च ।
योजनानि महावेगैः कृतानि त्वरितै स्तुतैः ॥
पञ्चमेन तथा चाह्ना प्लवगैः क्षिप्रकारिभिः ।
योजनानि त्रयोविंशत्सुवेलमधिकृत्य वै ॥
स वानरवरः श्रीमान् विश्वकर्मात्मजो बली ।
बबन्ध सागरे सेतुं यथाचास्यपिता तथा ॥
स नळेन कृतः सेतुः सागरे मकरालये ।

शुशुभे सुभगः श्रीमान् स्वातीपथ इवाम्बरे ॥
ततो देवास्सगन्धर्वास्सिद्धाश्चपरमर्षयः ।
आगम्य गगने तस्थुः द्रष्टुकामा स्तदद्भुतं ॥
दशयोजनविस्तीर्णं शतयोजनमायतम् ।
ददृशु र्देवगन्धर्वा नळसेतुं सुदुष्करम् ॥
आप्लवन्तः प्लवन्तश्च गर्जन्तश्च प्लवङ्गमाः ।
तदचिन्त्यमसह्यंच अद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥
ददृशुः सर्वभूतानि सागरे सेतुबन्धनम् ।

(Then after Nala's promise to look to the making of the Bridge) being despatched by Rama, the monkey-chiefs ran to the great forest on all sides in hundreds of thousands. The monkey chiefs looking like hills (themselves) clove the mountains and dragged them to the ocean. The monkeys filled it with trees of various kinds, Sala, Aswakarna, Dhava, Venu (Bamboo) Kutja, Arjuna, Tala (Palmyra) Tilaka, Tinisa, Bilva, Saptaparna trees, karnikaras that had flowered well, Mango and Asoka trees. The monkeys brought the trees broken or pulled up with the roots holding them up like Indra's banners.[1] They carried from all sides palmyras, pomegranate bushes, cocoanut palms, Vibheetakes, Vakulas, Khadiras and Nimbas.

The huge-bodied ones pull out elephant-like rocks and convey them by means of contrivances. And wherever they were thrown, the water rose up to the sky. And on all sides the monkeys agitated the ocean. Some hold lines extending to a hundred yojanas, others hold sounding poles, some others examine the path.

1. Huge banners carried on festive occasions in some parts of India. They are also called " Indradhwajas " See Raghuvamsa, Canto IV.

Ten yojanas broad and a hundred yojanas long, Nala made the great bridge in the middle of the ocean (The Lord of Rivers.)

Thus was the bridge being built by the terrible workers, the monkeys. The monkeys in hundreds, obedient to the command of Rama, bound it with peaks, huge like clouds, and with timber and with reeds. With trees that were covered with flowers do the monkeys make the bridge. They are seen running about like elephants carrying rocks as big as peaks, and the peaks themselves of mountains. Great noise indeed issued out of the ocean as the rocks and peaks were thrown into it.

On the first day fourteen yojanas were finished by the joyful monkeys, who were huge as elephants and who humed up with their work. And on the second day twenty yojanas were quickly finished by the strong and the terrible monkeys. And on the third day twenty-one yojanas were made owing to their eagerness. And on the fourth day were constructed twenty-two yojanas by them for they expedited their labours. And on the fifth day, the fast working monkeys finished three and twenty yojanas bringing the bridge right up to Mount Suvela (on the Lanka coast).

The best of monkeys called Nala, the son of Viswakarma built the bridge in the ocean. He was even like his father (in skill).

The bridge fashioned by Nala in the Ocean the abode of whales was good to look at and shone like the Milky Way in the sky.

Then the gods with the celestial bards, the **siddhas** and the great sages came there and stayed in the sky to behold that great wonder. The gods and the **gandharvas**

beheld the bridge made by Nala so hard of achievement and extending 10 yojanas in breadth and a hundred yojanas in length. And the monkeys leaping, flying and roaring (out of joy) as well as all sentient creatures witnessed that inconceivable mighty and thrilling wonder in the ocean, (the *Setu-Bandhana*).

4. *Adhyatma Ramayana (Yuddhakanda).*

सेतुमारभमाणस्तु तत्र रामेश्वरंशिवम् ।
संस्थाप्यपूजयित्वाहरामोलोकहितायच ॥
प्रणमेत्सेतुबन्धंयोदृष्ट्वारामेश्वरं शिवम् ।
संकल्प्यनियतोभूत्वागत्वावाराणसींनरः ॥
आनीयगंगासलिलैः रामेशमभिषिच्यच ।
समुद्रेक्षिप्ततद्भारः ब्रह्मप्राप्नोत्यसंशयम् ॥

(At the beginning of the construction of the Setu' Rama established Siva known as Rameswara and worshipped him. Then he uttered the following words for the good of the world: "He who bows to the Setubandha and sees Siva Rameswara with due vow and observance or who goes to Benares brings water from the Ganges and bathes Rameswara with the same, will have his weight of sin thrown into the sea and will attain salvation without doubt).

5. *Ananda Ramayana* :—

(a) Sarakanda (Canto X from stanza 69).

नलमाज्ञापयामाससेत्वर्थंरघुनन्दनः ।
सेतुमारभमाणस्तुविघ्नेशम् स्थाप्यराघवः ॥
नवग्राहाणांपूजार्थं पाषाणान् नवसादरम् ।

नलहस्तेन संस्थाप्यपूर्वतत्रमहोदधौ ॥
ततः सागरसंयोगे स्वनाम्नालिङ्गमुत्तमम् ।
स्थापयामीतिनिश्चित्यमारुतिं वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥

(*b*) (*From stanza 122*):—

मुहूर्ता तिक्रमो मेऽद्यभविष्यतितस्त्वहम् ।
कृत्वालिङ्गम् सैकतञ्च सेत्वादौस्थापयामिवै ॥
इत्युक्त्वा वानरान् सर्वान्मुनिभिः परिवेष्टितः ।
सैकतम् स्थापयामास लिङ्गम् रामो विधानतः ॥

(*c*) *From stanza 140.*

तदाह मारुतिं रामः त्वंमल्लिङ्गोत्तरंत्विदम् ।
विश्वनाथाभिधंलिङ्गं स्वीयं संस्थापयाधुना ॥
तथेतिमारुतिर्लिंगं स्थापयामाससादरम् ।
मारुतेश्चैवलिंगाय ददौ रामेश्वरं तदा ॥
असंपूज्य निश्वनाथं मारुते त्वत्प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
मदादौपूजयन्त्यत्र येनराः लिङ्गमुत्तमम् ॥
रामेश्वराभिधंसेतौ तेषां पूजाव्रथाभवेत् ।

(*d*) *Yatrakanda* (Canto IX from stanza 28).

विघ्नेश्वरं नमस्कृत्यपुरासंस्थापितम् स्वयम् ॥
स्नात्वा वै नवपाषाणेययौदेव्याश्चपट्टनम् ।
स्नात्वावेतालतीर्थेवै तीर्त्वौघं सागरस्यच ॥
स्नात्वापिभैरवेतीर्थं प्राप्यैकान्तस्थितंनिजम् ।
अवरुह्यविमानाग्रात् पद्भ्यांसर्वजनैस्सह ॥
गत्वालक्ष्मणकुण्डेऽथ स्वकुण्डेऽपिविगाह्यच ।

स्नात्वाजटायुतीर्थेच गत्वा तं गन्धमादनम् ॥
आदौनत्वाविश्वनाथं पुरानीतं हनूमता ।
रामेश्वरं ततोनत्वाकृत्वागंगाभिषेचनम् ॥
काचकुंभादिकंत्यक्त्वाधनुष्कोट्यां रघूत्तमः ।
कोटितीर्थं धनुष्कोट्याचकारकूपमुत्तमम् ॥
क्षेत्रपापप्रशान्त्यर्थं दृष्ट्वा श्रीश्वेतमाधवम् ।
नानादानादिकं कृत्वामासमेकं विलंघ्यच ॥
वाहनारूढदेवानांमहोत्साहंविधायच ।
क्षेत्रपापप्रशान्त्यर्थम् कोटितीर्थम् विगाह्यच ॥

(*a*) Rama (the descendant of Raghu issued orders to Nala regarding the bridge. At the beginning of its construction he established Vighneswara and then established with due reverence Nine Blocks of stone for the worship of the Nine Planets after getting them stuck up in the ocean by the hand of Nala. Then resolving to establish an excellent lingam bearing his own name at the junction of the oceans he addressed these words to Hanuman).

(*b*) *From sloka 122* (*Owing to Hanuman's delay in bringing the lingam Rama said*):—

"The fixed **Muhurta** is passing away. I will therefore make a linga of sand and establish it at the beginning of the Setu." "Saying thus to all the Vanaras, and surrounded by the sages, Rama duly established the linga of sand. . . . . .").

(*c*) *From sloka 140.*

Then Rama said to Hanuman "On the north side of my lingam now establish thine own named Viswanatha.'

Hanuman did so with reverence. Then Rama gave this boon to the lingam established by Hanuman. " O Maruti! the worship of those who adore my Rameswara linga without worshipping beforehand the Viswanatha established by thee, will all be in vain).

(*d*) (*From Yatrakanda " where Rama's subsequent pilgrimage to the Setu is described*):—

Rama bowed to Vighneswara established by himself at Uppoor bathed at Navapashana, or Devipattanam, bathed in the Vetala Teertha, crossed the strait (*the current of the ocean*), bathed in the Bhairava Teertha and reached, his own shrine called Ekanta (solitude). He got down from the aero-car with all his retinue and proceeded on foot to Lakshmanagunda, bathed in it, and also in the holy pool known by his own name. Then he bathed in the Agni Teertha and at Dhanushkodi and in the Jatai Teertha. Then after visiting Gandhamadana hill, he first bowed to Viswandha brought by Hanuman formerly, and then worshipped Rameswara, pouring water from the Ganges on him. He threw glassware and pots, etc. in Dhanushkodi. With the point of his bow he pierced an excellent spring called *Kodi Theertha*. And then to complete the washing away of sins he paid a visit to the white Madhava, gave gifts and stayed a month. The celestial spectators in their aero-cars were much pleased. For complete purification Rama bathed in the Kodi Teertha (again).

The above extracts show (1) that the Rameswara linga was established by Rama at the meeting place of the two seas before the bridge was begun; (2) that the Setu could not have been far off from the Temple of Rameswara for the bath in the Setu was then followed by a bath in the fresh water pool called Jatai Teertha; (3) that

the Kodi Teertha was already in existence; the other Sarva Teertha, preferred by Brahmins now, being not at all mentioned; and lastly that the white coral image of Madhava had not yet acquired the name of Setu Madhava though closely connected with the Setu yatra.

III. The PURANAS.

6. *Agneya Purana* (*Bhuvanakosavarnane, Kshetra-mahtmye*).

(६) आमन्त्र्य ब्राह्मणवरान् रामः स्वाध्यायतत्परान् ।
लंकांजिगमिषुर्भूयः चक्रतीर्थमुपागमत् ॥
अवाप्य तीरं जलधेः रामस्त्वादाय कार्मुकम् ।
संदधेऽस्मिन् शरवरं दीव्यज्ज्वलनवैभवम् ॥
तस्मिन्संधीयमानेतु क्षुभितः सरितांपतिः ।
आत्मानंदर्शयित्वा तं राघवं शरणंगतः ॥
नलेनवानरेन्द्रेण बध्वासेतुंमयिप्रभो ।
गच्छ रामयथाकामंमित्युवाचमहोदधिः ॥
स तस्यवचनादब्धौ सेतुंबध्वानलेनवै ॥
तत्पालनायप्रोवाचराजानम् चार्यभूमिपम् ।
तत्सेतुमपिदेवेशं पाहि दर्भासनेश्वरम् ॥
तत्सेतुरक्षकइतिभवन्नाम भविष्यति ।
इत्युक्त्वा सह सौमित्रिः सपवित्रकरः पुरम् ॥
नानाद्वीपांतरानीतैर्नानारत्नैरलंकृतम् ।
नानाद्रव्यसमोपेतैः आपणैः शुभवीथिभिः ॥
मध्ये विमानं धनिकैर्वणिग्भि रुपशोभितम् ।
तस्यप्रागुत्तमारुह्य ययौ लंकापुरंप्रति ॥

Taking leave of the excellent Brahmans devoted to the study of the Vedas, and desirous of going to Lanka, Rama again came to Chakra Teertha (near Darbhasayanam). Getting to the sea shore, Rama drew tight his bow and fixed in it an excellent arrow shining like flame. Even while it was being fixed, the Lord of the Rivers became agitated, showed himself to Rama and begged his protection. The Ocean King said "O Lord, get a Setu constructed in me by Nala—the great Vanara chief, and march to the desired place."

And he according to that word got the Setu constructed by Nala and for its protection bespake "A noble prince! the chief of that region! Guard my Setu and the Lord Iswara in this Darbhasayana (village); so shalt thou be known as the Guardian of the Setu." Saying thus the Holy one together with Saumitri mounted the **vimana** and proceeded to the city of Lanka decorated with all sorts of precious stones brought from various lands, shining like shops in which all sorts of things were stored, having fine streets and rich merchants inhabiting palaces therein.

This is the one authority which mentions the institution **of the Setupathies**. The "*Aryabhumipa*" may mean "a *Ruler in the land of the Aryas*" as distinguished from the rulers in the land of the Rakshasas. There is no mention here of Guha.

7. *The Bhagavata Purana (X. Skanda, Canto. 79).*

(७) (बलरामः) सामुद्रं सेतुमगमत् महापातकनाशनम् ।

(*Balarama after visiting Venkatadhri and Southern Mathura*) went to the Ocean-bridge which removes even great sins.

8. *Padma Purana (Srishti kanda, Canto. 38).*

(८) एषसेतुर्मयाबद्धः सामुद्रे वरुणालये ॥
त्रिभिर्दिनैस्समाप्तिंवैर्नीतोवानरसत्तमैः ।
सेतुनातेनराजेन्द्र पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः ॥
आगत्यप्रतिबाधेरन्नाज्ञाभंगोभवेत्तव ।
श्रुत्वैतद्राघवो वाक्यंराक्षसोत्तमभाषितम् ॥
कार्मुकंगृह्यहस्तेनरामः सेतुंद्विधाच्छिनत् ।
त्रिर्विभज्यचवेगेन मध्येवैदशयोजनम् ॥
छित्वातुयोजनंचैकं एकंखण्ड त्वयंकृतम् ।
बेलावनम् समासाद्य रामः पूजांरमापतेः ॥
कृत्वारामेश्वरं नाम्नादेवदेवं जनार्दनम् ।
दक्षिणादुदधेश्चैवःनिर्जगामत्वरान्वितः ॥
अन्तरिक्षादभू द्वाणीमेघगंभीरनिस्वना ।
(रुद्रउवाच):—
भो भो रामास्तु भद्रंतेस्थितोहमिहसांप्रतम् ॥
यावज्जगदिदं राम यावदेषा धरा स्थिता ।
तावदेव च तेसेतु स्तीर्थस्थास्यति राघव ॥
त्वयाकृतंपरं तीर्थसेत्वाख्यंरघुनन्दन ।
आगम्य मानवा राजन् पश्येयुरिहसागरे ॥
महापातकयुक्ताये तेषांपापंविलीयते ।
ब्रह्महत्यादिपापानियानिकष्टानिकानिचित् ॥
दर्शनादेवनश्यन्ति नात्रकार्याविचारणा ।

(The Setu was constructed by me in the Ocean, the abode of Varuna ; it was finished in the space of three days by my able monkey-troops. Vibheshana said " O King, all

men will come over the bridge and cause me annoyance against thy order. How am I to obstruct them and what shall I do in those circumstances? Hearing this speech of the best of Rakshasas, Rama took up his bow and cut up the bridge in two places, thus dividing it into three parts; the central parts being ten yojanas in length, and the other parts, each one Yojana. Then he reached the forest on the beach and worshipped the Lord of Lakshmee, Janardana, the god of gods; and naming him Rameswara, he performed Abhisheka (bathing of the god). Then he quickly departed from the Southern Ocean.

Then a voice deep like the rumble of clouds was heard from the Heavens :—

Rudra said "O Rama! peace be to thee! I am dwelling here at present. Thy Setu will remain holy as long as the world lasts and the earth endures.

Men who look at this Holy Setu of thine in the Ocean, even though they are stained with great sins, will have their sins removed. By the mere sight of it, sins like *Brahmicide* and all sorts of difficulties will vanish without any doubt."

The Setu was finished in five days according to Vaalmeeki, but this Purana assigns only three days to that affair. In this passage we have an account of the breaking up of the Setu. Ceylon must have been near enough to India for the ruler of it to fear frequent invasions from the mainland.

Another curious point to be noticed is the statement that Rama worshipped and performed Abhishekam to Vishnu and named him Rameswara. The appearance of Rudra is subsequent. Further, the worship is made on the return from Lanka. There is no talk of the *Pratishta of a linga at all.*

9. *Siva Purana* (*Canto. 31.*)

राम उवाच
त्वया स्थेयमिह स्वामिन् लोकानांपावनायच ।
परेषामुपकारार्थं यदितुष्टोऽसिशंकर ॥
सूत उवाच
इत्युक्त्वातु शिवस्तत्र लिङ्गरूपोऽभवत्तदा ।
रामेश्वरस्य नाम्नावै प्रसिद्धो जगतीतले ॥
रामस्तुतत्प्रभावाद्वै सिन्धुमुत्तीर्यचांजसा ।
रावणादीन् निहत्याशु राक्षसान् प्राप तां प्रियाम् ॥
रामेश्वरस्य महिमात्वद्भुतो भुविचातुलः ।
भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदश्चैव सर्वदाभक्तकामदः ॥
दिव्यगंगाजलेनैव स्नापयिष्यति यः शिवम् ।
रामेश्वरंचसद्भक्त्यासजीवन्मुक्तएवहि ॥
इह भुक्त्वाखिलान् भोगान् देवानामपिदुर्लभान् ।
अन्ते प्राप्य परं ज्ञानम् कैवल्यम् प्राप्नुयाद्ध्रुवम् ॥
इतिवश्चसमाख्यातम् ज्योतिर्लिङ्गं शिवस्यतु ।
रामेश्वराभिधं दिव्यं शृण्वतां पापतारकम् ॥

Rama said " If thou art pleased, O Lord Sankara ! stay thou here for the purification of the world and for the good of men."

Sita said " Being thus invoked, Siva assumed the form of a Linga named Rameswara, well known on the face of the earth. Rama with the help of this God's greatness was able to cross the ocean quickly, to kill the Rakshasas and to recover his beloved. The greatness of Rameswara is wonderful and unique. He gives sustenance

and salvation and fulfils the desires of his devotees always. He who bathes Siva with the water of the divine Ganges, with pure devotion, will attain salvation even without death. He will enjoy in this world all sorts of blessings unattainable even to the Gods, and will attain pure knowledge in the end, and then salvation. Thus have I expounded to you all about the luminous **Lingam** of Siva known as Rameswara—the mere hearing about whom removes all sin.

10. *Kurma Purana.*

सेतुमध्ये महादेवम् ईशानंकृत्तिवाससम् ।
स्थापयामास वै लिंगं पूजयामास राघवः ॥
तस्यदेवोमहादेवः पार्वत्यासहशंकरः ।
प्रत्यक्षमेवभगवान् दत्तवान् वरमुत्तमम् ॥
ये त्वया स्थापितं लिङ्गं द्रक्ष्यन्तीहद्विजातयः ।
महापातकसंयुक्तास्तेषां पापं विनश्यति ॥
यावत्सेतुश्च यावच्च स्थास्याम्यत्रतिरोहितः ।
स्नानंदानंजपःश्राद्धं भविष्यत्यक्षयंततः ॥

Rama established a Lingam of the Lord Mahadeva who loves to wear the elephant-hide, in the middle of the Setu and worshipped him. To him the great God of Gods, Sankara, appeared together with Parvati and gave this precious boon:—

"Those twice-born ones that visit the **Lingam** established by thee, will get rid of their sins even if they be of the worst kind....."

"As long as the Setu stands, so long will I dwell here invisible. Bath, gift, penance, offering to the **manes** will have unending fruit in this place."

11. *Skanda Purana* (*Setu Mahatmya Khanda, Canto* 1.)

अस्ति रामेश्वरंनाम रामसेतुपवित्रितम् ।
क्षेत्राणामपिसर्वेषांतीर्थानामपिचोत्तमम् ॥
दृष्टमात्रे रामसेतौ मुक्तिःसंसारसागरात् ।
हरेहरौच भक्तिःस्यात् तथापुण्यसमृद्धिता ॥
कर्मणः त्रिविधस्यापि सिद्धिःस्यात्नात्र संशयः ।
यो नरो जन्ममध्येतुसेतुं भक्त्यावलोकयेत् ॥
तस्य पुण्यफलं वक्ष्ये शृणुध्वं मुनिपुङ्गवाः ।
मातृतः पितृतश्चैवद्विकोटिकुलसंयुतः ॥
निर्विश्य शंभुलोकं तं ततोमोक्षंसमश्नुते ।
गण्यन्ते पांसवो भूमौ गण्यन्ते दिवि तारकाः ॥
सेतुदर्शनजम् पुण्यं शेषेणापिनगण्यते ।
समस्तदेवतारूपः सेतुबन्धः प्रकीर्तितः ॥
तदर्शनवतः पुंसः कःपुण्यं वदितुंक्षमः ।
सेतुं दृष्ट्वानरोविप्रः सर्वयागकरःस्मृतः ॥
स्नातश्चसर्वतीर्थेषु तपोऽतप्यत्तथाखिलम् ।
सेतुंगच्छेति योब्रूयाद्यं कंवापिनरंद्विजः ॥
सोपितत्फलमाप्नोति किमन्यैर्बहुभाषणैः ।
सेतुम्रामेश्वरं लिङ्गं गन्धमादनपर्वतम् ॥
चिन्तयन्मनुजः सत्यंसर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ।
सेतुसैकतमध्ये यः शेतेतत्पांसुगुण्ठितः ॥
यावन्तः पांसवोलग्नाः तस्यांगेविप्रसत्तमाः ।
तावतां ब्रह्महत्यानाम् नाशःस्यान्नात्रसंशयः ॥
सुरापानयुतं तस्य तत्क्षणादेवनश्यति ।

From canto 43:—

रामप्रतिष्ठितंलिङ्गं यः पश्यतिनरःसकृत् ॥
सनरोमुक्तिमाप्नोतिशिवसायुज्यरूपिणीम् ।
रामेश्वरमहालिङ्गे तीर्थानिसकलान्यपि ॥
विद्यन्तेसर्वदेवाश्चपितरोमुनयस्तथा ।
एककालंद्विकालं वा त्रिकालं सर्वदैववा ॥
येस्मरन्तिमहादेवंरामनाथं विमुक्तिदम् ।
कीर्तयन्त्यथवाविप्राः तेविमुक्ताघपंजराः ।
रामेश्वराख्यंयल्लिङ्गम् रामचन्द्रेणपूजितम् ॥
तस्यस्मरणमात्रेणयमपीडापिनोभवेत् ।
रामेश्वरेमहालिङ्गे सकृद्दृष्टे मुनीश्वराः ॥
किं काश्या गयया किंवा प्रयागेनापि किंफलम् ।
रामेश्वरमहालिङ्गे पूजितेवास्मृतेऽपिवा ॥
विष्णुनाब्रह्मणार्किंवाशक्रेणाप्यखिलामरैः ।

There is a holy place called Rameswaram, made sacred by the bridge of Rama, the best of all holy places and Teerthas. The mere sight of Ramas Setu will secure freedom from the ocean of Samsara (worldly life) devotion to Hara and Hari (Siva and Vishnu), increase of merit and the full fruit of the threefold Karma. No doubt about it. O ye best of sages ! listen, I will declare to you the merits of him who once in his life sets his eye on Rama's bridge.

Together with two crores of his ancestors on the mother's and the father's side he will enter Siva's world and attain salvation. The dust grains of the earth may be counted as well as the Stars in the heavens, but even

Sesha (the thousand-tongued) cannot count the merit accruing from a visit to Setu. The Setubandha (the bridge) is said to partake of the Divinity of all the Gods. Who can have the power to reckon up the merit of one who looks upon it? A man, a Brahman who looks upon the Setu is regarded as having performed all sorts of sacrifice. What is the use of many words? He who advises a person "Go to the Setu" will get the merit of one who has bathed in all holy places and performed penance therein. The man who constantly meditates upon Setu Rameswara Linga and Mount Gandhamadana will be rid of all sins. O best of Brahmans! he who sleeps on the sands of the Setu and is smeared with the dust thereof as many Brahmahatyas of his, will be destroyed as there are particles of dust on his body without doubt. He whose whole body is touched by the breeze from over the Setu—ten thousand drink-sins of his will disappear that very moment!

From canto 43.

That man who once looks at the linga established by Rama, will attain salvation in the form of oneness with Siva. All Teerthas, all Gods, Munis, pitris are in the Rameswara Linga. The Brahmins who once, twice, or thrice a day, or constantly think of the Saviour Ramanatha or praise Him, will be freed from the cage of sin. The mere thought of the Linga worshipped by Rama will drive away the coercion of Yama (Death). O sages! after a glance at Rameswara Linga, what need is there to go to Kasi (Benares) Gaya, or Prayag? After worshipping or even thinking of the great Rameswara Linga, what need is there to worship Brahma, Vishnu, Indra or other Gods?

12. *Markandeya Purana* (Kalpataru pratigraha prayaschitta.)

प्रतिगृह्यद्विजोलोभात् तरुमेनंसुखाप्तये ॥
निष्कृतिस्तस्यनास्तीहनरकादेवविंशतेः ।
रामसेत्वादितीर्थेषु त्र्यब्दंचस्नानतोऽपिवा ॥

(If for his wordly happiness and out of avarice, a Brahmin accepts a gift of the image of this tree, there is no escape for him from the twenty-one-fold hell not even by bathing for three years in holy places like the Rama Setu.)

13. *Brahmanda Purana* (Tulapurushadi pratigraha prayaschitta.)

सेत्वादिपुण्यतीर्थेषु उपरागादिपर्वसु ।
पूर्वजःप्रतिगृह्णातितुलांराज्ञोविशेषतः ॥
भवेद्रक्षःसहस्राब्दंदृष्टिहीनोनिराश्रयः ।

(That Brahmin who, in holy places like the Setu and on sacred occasions like Eclipses, etc., accepts the weight in gold or silver of a person, especially of a king will become a Rakshasa and remain so for a thousand years, sightless and restless.)

14. *Matsya Purana* (Dhenu pratigraha prayaschitta.)

प्रतिगृह्यद्विजोलोभात् धेनुम्जलमयींनृपात् ॥
यागादिकं स्वशुद्धिवा अकृत्वाभोगलोलुपः ।
एतद्दोषोपशान्त्यर्थं प्रायश्चित्तंसमाचरेत् ॥
गंगायां वाथ गौतम्यां कृष्णवेण्यां नदीतटे ।
कावेर्यां तुङ्गभद्रायां चापाग्रेगन्धमादने ॥

(The Brahmin who out of avarice accepts the figure of cow filled with water, and being, devoted to pleasures does not expiate the same by performing some **yagum** or

otherwise purify himself will suffer in Hell; for the removal of this sin one should undergo *prayaschittam* in one of the following holy places (whichever is nearest to him):— the Ganges, the Godaveri, the Krishna, the Kaveri, the Tungabhadra, Dhanushkodi, and Mount Gandhamadana.

VI. The Smritis.

15. *Manu Smriti* (Chandalee Gamana prayaschitta.)

तदनुज्ञामवाप्याथचापाग्रं वेगतो व्रजेत् ।
प्रातःस्नात्वा मासमात्रं शुद्धिमाप्नोतिपूर्वजः ॥

(Then, getting his the Guru's permission, one should quickly proceed to Dhanushkodi. A Brahmin will get purification by bathing therein every morning for a month.)

16. *Galava Smriti.*

गङ्गासेतुप्रयागाश्च गङ्गासागरसंगमाः ।
गौतमी कृष्णवेणीच कावेरीचमहानदी ॥
दर्शनात् स्वर्गदा नृणांस्नानान्मोक्षप्रदायिनी ।

(A look at these will secure heaven to men, and a bath in them will secure (complete) salvation :—the Ganges, the Setu, the Prayag, the mouth of the Ganges, (where it joins the ocean) the Godavari, the Krishna, the Kaveri and the Mahanadee.)

17. *Gautama Smriti.*

द्विजः कामातुरो गच्छेत् अविचार्य जनंगमाम् ॥
पश्चात्चाण्डालजायेति ज्ञात्वाशुद्धिपरायणः ।
रामेश्वरेधनुष्कोट्यां प्रातःस्नानाद्विशुध्यति ॥
मासमात्रेण राजेन्द्र नान्यथाशुद्धिरिष्यते ।

विष्णुपादोद्भवा गङ्गादशकृच्छ्रफलप्रदा ॥
यमुनाचतथा नृणांदशकृच्छ्रफलप्रदा ।
गौतमीकृष्णवेर्णाच नवकृच्छ्रफलप्रदा ॥
पिनाकिनीचकावेरी ह्यष्टकृच्छ्रफलप्रदा ।
फल्गुर्नीताम्रपर्णीच नवकृच्छ्रफलप्रदा ॥
तुङ्गभद्राभीमनदी सप्तकृच्छ्रफलप्रदा ।
वञ्जुळा भवनाशीच ऋतुकृच्छ्रफलप्रदा ॥
चापाग्रेस्नानमात्रेण ह्यब्दकृच्छ्रफलप्रदम् ।

(O king! if a Brahmin out of lust unreflectingly goes in into a Chandala woman, but desires purification after learning the truth about her, he can get purified only by bathing every morning for a month at Dhanushkodi. There is no other way.)

The Ganges sprung out of the foot of Vishnu will give ten-fold merit to men. So will the Jumna. The Godavari and the Krishna will give nine-fold merit. The Pennar and the Kaveri give eight-fold merit. The Phattenee and the Tamraparnee give nine-fold merit. The Tungabhadra and the Bheema give seven-fold merit. The Vaujula and the Bhavanasee give six-fold merit. Dhanushkodi will give there hundred and sixty-fold merit for one single bath.)

18. *Devala Smriti.*

तत्राग्नेयस्यदिग्भागे पर्वतोगन्धमादनः ॥
रामलिङ्गधनुष्कोटिं सर्वतीर्थपरिष्कृतम् ।

(To the South East of that there is the Mount Gandhamadana and Ramalinga-Dhanushkodi which has the merit of all Teerthas combined.)

19. *Marcechi Smriti.*

श्रीशैलं वेङ्कटाद्रिञ्च काञ्चीं श्रीरङ्गनायकम् ॥
रामेश्वरं धनुष्कोटिं स्वभावात्पष्टिवर्षगः ।
नपश्येन्नास्तिकतयागर्दभोभुवि जायते ॥

(If out of an atheistic mind one never visits even till his sixtieth year any of these holy places, *viz.*, Sree Saila, Venkatadri (Tirupati), Kanchee (Conjeevaram), Sree Rangam, Rameswaram or Dhanushkodi—one will be reborn a donkey on this earth.)

20. *Parasara Smriti. (Canto XII, from Stanza 64.)*

चतुर्विद्योपपन्नस्तुविधिवत् ब्रह्मघातुकः ।
समुद्रसेतुगमनम्प्रायश्चित्तंविनिर्दिशेत् ॥
दशयोजनविस्तीर्णं शतयोजनमायतम् ।
रामचन्द्रसमादिष्टं नलमश्चयसञ्चितम् ॥
सेतुंदृष्ट्वासमुद्रस्य ब्रह्महत्यांव्यपोहति ।
सेतुंदृष्ट्वाविशुद्धात्मा स्नवगाहेत्समागरम् ॥

(One who is well-versed in the four Vidyas, should duly prescribe to a Brahmicide, a pilgrimage to the Setu as a means of purification. The Setu, ten yojanas broad and a hundred yojanas long, ordered by Rama and built by Nala—a mere sight of it will remove the sin of Brahmicide—*With the mind purified by a look at the Setu one should bath in the ocean.*)

The last sentence in the above deserves to be borne in the mind by the pilgrim.

V. Modern Poetry (Stotras.)

21. *Vedanta Desika's Dayasataka.*

कृपेकृतजगद्धिते कृपणजन्तुचिन्तामणे ।
रमासहचरं तदा रघुधुरीणयन्त्यात्वया ॥
व्यभज्यत सरित्पतिः सकृदवेक्षणात् तत्क्षणात् ।
प्रकृष्टबहुपातकप्रशमहेतुनासेतुना ॥

O Vishnu's mercy! the benefactress of the world! to make Rama the foremost of the Raghu-race, Thou did'st cleave the ocean in twain by the prompt construction of the Setu—a single look at which will annihilate even the greatest of sins.

22. *Viswagunadarsa by Venkatadhri.*

पातुंपातकिनोजनानशरणान् पातुं तमस्सागरं ।
यातुंयातुपुरीं अहिन्नगमुखेजेतुं दशास्यादिकान् ॥
नेतुं भूतनयां मुदाविरहिणो एतुं यशश्शाश्वतम् ।
दातुंशर्मचराघवेण रचितंसेतुंनमस्कुर्महे ॥

We bow to the Setu which was constructed by Raghava Rama to save the sinful and the helpless, to drink away the ocean of darkness, to go to the city of demons and defeat the enemies led by the ten-headed demon in the battle-front to lead back the forlorn Seeta to joy, to establish his own fame eternally, and to secure bliss to a mankind.

23. *Vedanta Desika's Raghuveeragadya* (41st Vakya)

प्रलयशिखिपरुषविशिख शिखाशोषितकूपारवारिपूर, प्रबलरिपु-
कलहकुतुकचटुलकपिकुल करतल तुलिताहतगिरिनिकर साधित-
सेतुपथसीमसीमन्तितसमुद्र,

O thou Rama ! who dids't dry up the welling flood of the ocean with thine arrow point fierce like the flame of the world-ending fire ; who did'st cleave the ocean in twain by means of the Setu constructed with the hills and rocks fetched and thrown in with their bards by the restless monkeys that were eagerly waiting for the battle with the great enemy.

24. *Alawandar's stotra* (*sloka 37.*)

त्वदर्थमंभोधिरमंथ्यबन्धि ॥

O Lakshmi ! the ocean was for thy sake churned *on one occasion* and bound *on another occasion by Vishnu.*

25. *Lakshmee Sahasra by Venkatadhri*

(Dasavatara Sthabaka, sloka 23.)

अबध्नादप्युदां निधिमथदशग्रीवमवधीत् ॥

Vishnu ! for thy sake bound up the vast store of waters and then destroyed the ten-necked demon.

APPENDIX F 1.

The list showing the Grand Annual Festivals conducted in the Rameswaram Temple with the time of commencement, etc.

No.	The names of the annual festivals.	Commencement	Finishing.	Remark.
1	**Maha Sivarathri Festival** (worth worshipping) (1) Rishaba Vahana Sevai (2) Maha Sivarathri Abishekam (3) Silver Car	Maka Shasti Krishna (Masi, Feb. March)	Maka Krishna New Moon	10 days
2	**Vasanthothsavam**	Vaisaka Sukla Shasti (May-June)	Vaisaka Full Moon	10 days
3	**Parathistanga Utsavam** (worth worshipping) (1) Rishaba Vahana Sevai (2) Car Festival	Jyesta Sukla Sudha Shasti (Ani. June-July)	Jyeshta Full Moon	10 days
4	**The Holy Marriage Festival** (worth worshipping) (1) Rishaba Vahana Sevai (2) Silver Car (3) Thapas Day (4) Sayana Sevai in the Gold Palanquin (5) Thirukalyanam Day	Ashada Baghula Krishna Ashtami Bharani Nakshatra (July-August Adi)	Saravana Suddah Sukla Dasami	17 days
5	**Navarathri Festival** (Dasara) Vijaya Dasami Day	Batra Batha Suddha Sukla Prathamai (August-September. Purattasi)	Dasami	10 days
6	**Skanta Shasti Utsavam** (Shasti Day)	Aswayaga Sudda Sukla Prathamai (Sept-Oct. Arpasi)	Aswayaga Sudha-Shasti	6 days
7	**Arudhra Darsanam Festival** The last Darsanam Day	Marga Sigha Sudda Shasti Sathaya Nakshathiram (Margazhi. December-January) (Darsanam)	Marga Sirisha Suddha Pournami	10 days

Besides the above there are (1) Monthly, (2) Fortnightly, (3) Weekly, (4) Special Festivals.

---

1. **Monthly** :—Krithika Days. God Subramaniya (Karthikeya) comes round the four car streets in His Silver Peacock vehicle during the nights between 9 and 10 p.m.

2. **Fortnightly : Pradosham Days** :—God Rameswar comes round the 3rd corridor in His Gold Rishaba Vahana between 5 and 6 p. m.

3. **Weekly : Friday Festivals** : —Goddess comes round the 3rd corridor every Friday night in Her Gold Palanquin after 9 p.m.

4. **Special Festivals** :—There will be Panchamoorthi Utsavam on these days.

1. *Sankaranthi Day* :—The First Day in the month of PUSHYA.

2. *Chaitra New Years Day* :—The first day in the month of CHAITRA.

3. *Maha Krithikai.* (Thirukarthikai Day)

4. *Floating Festivals* :—**Panchamoorthi Utsavam** in the Pournami of the Pushyam Month.

There will be a small festival on **Vaikunta Ekadasi Day** to Sri Rama.

During the **New Moons** in the months of **Pushya** and **Ashada**, **God Kothanda Rama** is used to go to Dhanushkodi. **Holy Bathing Ghat** in His Gold **Garuda Vahana** for giving **Theertham.**

APPENDIX F 2.

PROGRAMME OF FESTIVAL.

In the month of February—(Masi-Mahasivarathri Festival).

Festival day.	VEHICLES—VAHANS.			
	DAY.		NIGHT.	
	God.	Goddess.	God.	Goddess.
1	...	...	Nandhikeswara Vahana	Hamsam.
2	Gold Kedagam	Gold Kedagam.	Karpaga Tree.	Kamadhenu.
3	Do.	Do.	Bhuta Vahana.	Parrot.
4	Do.	Do.	Kailasa Vahana.	Lion.
5	Do.	Do	Elephant.	Elephant.
6	Do.	Do.	Rishaba Vahana.	RishabaVahanam.
7	Do.	Do.	Indra Vimanam.	Indra Vimanam.
8	Indra Vimanam	Indra Vimanam.	Horse.	Horse.
9	Car.	Car.	Silver Car.	
10	Ekasimhasanam.		Rishaba Vahanam.	RishabaVahanam.
11	Do.		Kedagam.	Kedagam.
12	Do.		Do.	Do.

APPENDIX F 3.

PROGRAMME OF FESTIVAL.

In the month of July—(Ani—Prathistanga Festival).

Festival day.	VEHICLES—VAHANS.			
	DAY.		NIGHT.	
	God.	Goddess.	God.	Goddess.
1	...	...	Gold Kedagam	Gold Kedagam.
2	Gold Kedagam	Gold Kedagam	Karpaga Tree	Kamadhenu.
3	Do.	Do.	Bhuta Vahana	Parrot.
4	Do.	Do.	Kailasa Vahana	Hamsa Vahana.
5	Do.	Do.	Elephant	Elephant.
6	Do.	Do.	Rishaba Vahana	Rishaba Vahana.
7	Do.	Do.	Ekasimhasana.	
8	Do.	Do.	Horse	Horse.
9	Car	Car	Nandikeswara Vahana	Lion.
10	Ekasimhasana		Rishaba Vahana	Rishaba Vahana.

APPENDIX F 4.

PROGRAMME OF FESTIVAL.

In the Month of August—(Adi—Mrrriage Festival).

Festival day.	VEHICLES—VAHANS.			
	DAY.		NIGHT.	
	God.	Goddess.	God.	Goddess.
1	...	...	...	Gold Kedagam.
2	...	Gold Palanquin	...	Kamadhenu.
3	...	Do.	...	Hamsa Vahana.
4	...	Do.	...	Lion (Simmah).
5	...	Do.	...	Elephant.
6	...	Do.	...	Rishaba Vahana.
7	...	Do.	...	Silver Car.
8	...	Do.	...	Horse.
9	...	Car	...	Parrot
10	...	Gold Palanquin	...	...
11	Silver Kamala Vahan.		...	...
12	... Rishabavahana.		...	...
13	...		...	...
14	...		...	...
15	Ekasimhasanam.		...	...
16	...		...	...
17	...	Gold Kedagam	...	Gold Kedagan.

APPENDIX F 5.

The List showing the Vahanams (Vehicles) which are being used during festival occasions in the Rameswaram Temple with their respective values.

S. No.	Particulars.	Approximate Value (Rupees)
	GOLD :—	Rs.
1	Palanquin ...	1,58,750
2	Horse (for God) ...	13,100
3	Horse (for Goddess) ...	13,000
4	Lion ...	8,000
5	Kedag (for God) ...	14,050
6	Kedag (for Goddess) ...	12,500
7	Kedag (for God Subramaniya)	8,400
8	Kedag (for God Vinayakar) ...	4,800
9	Kamadhenu or the Divine Cow ...	6,700
10	Nandikeswara ...	11,000
11	Bull—(Puradosha Rishabha) ...	4,800
12	Garudan ...	8,700
13	Mount Kailas ...	16,750
14	Gold Swing (Manjam) ...	14,506
	SILVER :—	
15	Car ...	80,500
16	Elephant (for God) ...	14,300
17	Elephant (for Goddess) ...	12,550
18	Swan ...	6,800
19	Lotus ...	7,800
20	Bull (for God) ...	1,200
21	Bull (for Goddess) ...	1,100
22	Mouse ...	500
23	Peacock ...	700
24	Parrot ...	7,200
25	Karpaga Tree ...	12,950
26	Demon—Bhutha ...	9,200
27	Palanquin ...	5,050

APPENDIX F 6.

SREE RAMANATHA SWAMY SAHAYAM.

The List for some of the Jewels in the temple with their approximate values.

Serial No.	Description of Jewells.	Value.
		Rs.
1	Vaira Mudi-Diamond Crown ...	1,32,000
2	Crown (Goddess Creetam) ...	5,347
3	Pathaikam ...	1.490
4	Girdle Neck ...	1,190
5	Long row pearl necklette ...	1,800
6	Creetam ...	3,100
7	Pathaikam ...	1,085
8	Pathaikam Boat ...	1,120
9	Pearl necklace ...	1,010
10	Diamond Necklette ...	2,870
11	Agvette Diamonds in silver ...	1,450
12	Rows of Rubies, Nagabaranam ...	2,660
13	Nagabaranam Hood (amethyst) ...	4,570
14	Jewelled Creetam ...	11,000
15	Bajibandu Emeralds ...	3,090
16	Pathaikam and Chain ...	1,200
17	Pathaikam and Chain (Pancha Ratnam) ...	1.400
18	Pearls Creetam ...	1,683
19	Pearls Thalappagai (Turban) ...	1,748
20	Pearls Kondai (Head Ornaments) ...	4,220
21	Diamond Kalikkathura ...	3,500
22	Gold Vigraham (God) ...	29,082
23	Gold Vigraham (Goddess) ...	16,800
24	Gold Plate Angi ...	12,348
25	Pearl Garlands (God) ...	8,084
26	Pearl Garlands (Goddess) ...	9,610
27	Small (Vjayam Pathaikam) ...	4,999
28	Gold Hastham Pathaikam for Goddess ...	3,744
29	Diamond Pathasaram ...	3.500
30	Mysore Pearl Garlands ...	3,103
31	Diamond Mahari Pathaikam ...	11,000
32	Ruby Mahari Pathaikam ...	3,500

At the Treasure-house Sree Ramanatha's Shrine, Rameswaram.

A SONNET

I saw the wealth of Ormuz, Ind, displayed
Rich pearls and radiant gems and purest gold
Rarest of things that mines and mountains hold
And wealth of dark blue seas, gifts piety laid
At His great feet, by man's art lovelier made !
Pass by the jeweller's art and treasures untold
Behold the spirit devout these jewels enfold
The loveliness of hearts enshrined, inlaid
Within such costly caskets ! My gift is my heart
My God ! would that I could with poet's art
In jewelled words enshrine Thy lofty praise
To gleam like gold through immemorial days
With pearls and priceless stones and Jaspars hoar
The princely gifts of Ramnad and Indore !

T. B. KRISHNASWAMI,
D.E.O., *Ramnad.*

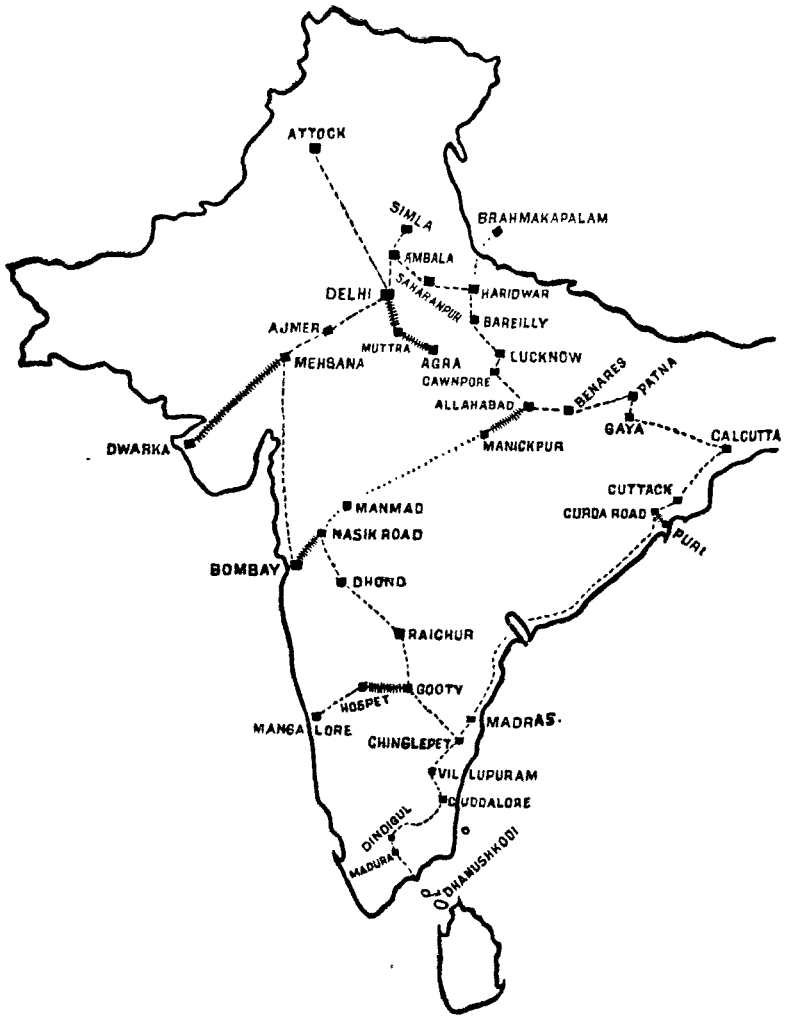

PLATE XXVII.—Sketch map showing the Pilgrim route in India to and from Danushkodi—*Vide* Page 189.

APPENDIX. G.

The list showing the names of the places of importance to be visited by an All-India Pilgrim.

1. **Dhanushkodi** :—Dharmasalas, Traveller's Bangalow available. Sacred for all Sanatana Dharmites. Holy Sea Bath.

2. **Rameswaram** :—The Great Sacred Temple. Sacred Theerthams for baths. Surroundings worth seeing. Dharmasalas available. Also a Vishun temple at Kothandaraman Koil, five miles off. Sacred for both Saivaites and Vaishnavaites.

3. **Ramnad** :—Ramalingavilas. Worth visiting. Station to go to Thiruoothirakosamangai, Thiruppullani (Dharbasayanam) and Navapashanam. The first is very important for Saivaites.

4. **Madura** :—The Greatest Siva Temple in Southern India. Worth seeing. Dharmasalas available. Holy Theertham in the Temple. Vaigai bath. Sacred for Saivaites and Srivaishnavas. Station to go to other neighbouring sacred places as Thirupparankundram (Subramanya Kshetram), Alagar Koil (Tirumalirunsolai) (Vishnu Kshetram) and other places.

5. **Dindigal (Palni)**—Station to go to Palni, one of the important Subramaniya Kshetram and a place of pilgrimage not to be left without being worshipped. Shanmuganadhi bath.

From Madura start for Tinnevelly (Tamarabarni bath), Thothadri (Vanamamalai), Srivaikuntam, Alwar Tiru-nagari (Nava Tirupathis), Tiruchendur and Anantasayanam, Cape Camorin, Varkalai, Suchendram, Vaikam and other places. Courtalam and Papavinasam baths very important.

6. **Trichinopoly** :—The famous shrines of Srirangam, and Jambukeswaram. The former is the most extensive and celebrated of the Temples of South India with probably Thirupati as its equal and attracts several thousands even from Northern India. It is dedicated to Vishnu—Ranganatha. The latter is sacred to Saivas and the shrine is one of the five lingams, Prithivi, Appu,

Theyu, Vayu and Akasam. The Shrine here is called Appulingam as Appu (water) comes out from the shrine. It is one of the strong holds of His Holiness the Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Pita, of Kumbakonam. The Cauveri bath important.

7. **Tanjore** :—Contains many beautiful temples dedicated to Siva and Vishnu; in one of the former (Brihadeswara Temple) there is a huge holy bull (Nandi) as well as a big and excellent tower. Dharmasalas available. About seven miles, from Tanjore there is also a famous Siva Temple at Tiruvadi worth visiting' Conveyances can be easily secured at the station. Cauvery bath. A large Sanskrit College is working here. This is one of the Jeevanmukthi Kshetram.

8. **Kumbakonam** :—Sacred for Saivaites as well as Sri Vaishnavas. Several Dharmasalas. The ancient temples of Vishnu and Siva are excellent. Cauvery bath. Mamangam Tank (Mahamakam Tank) for bath, once in 12 years. Noted for brass and silver vessels. About four miles from the station there is a famous temple called Swamimalai dedicated to God Subramania (Karthikeya or Kumara) worth visiting.

9. **Thiruvadamarudur**.—Important Siva Kshetram, otherwise called Madiyarjanam. Cauveri bath. Holy Theertham, Karunyamirtham and Muthi Mahlaingam. Most worthy for worship. Tiruvaduthurai where His Holiness Sri Pandara Sannidbi Maha Sannidhanam the head ot the greatest saivite mutt resides-is nearer to this.

10. **Mayavaram** :—Sacred for both Saivites and Sri-vaishnavas. Cauvery bath important. Siva temple worth visiting. Station to go to surrounding sacred places as Thirukkadiyoor, Srivanchyam, Swetharanyam, etc., important places of Jeevanmukthi Kshetram. The saivites mutts of Dharma-puram and Tiruppanandal are nearer to this.

11. **Chidambaram** :—Sacred to Vaishnavas and Saivites. Dharmasalas available. One of the 5 lingams Prithvi, Appu,

Theyu, Vayu and Akasam, is enshrined here and *i.e.* Agasalingam. Raja Sir Annamalai University is located here.

12. **Cuddalore** :—A famous Siva temple along the sacred river Gadilam. Also a Vishnu temple on the banks of the river Penniar four miles off. This is called Thiruvahindrapuram.

13. **Villupuram** :—The Railway station to change for the most famous and celebrated temples of Thirukoilur and Thiruvannamalai and Pondicherry. Thiruvannamalai is one of the 5 Kshetrams, where the Theyu lingam is enshrined. The place is worth visiting. Maha Kritigai is the important festival here.

14. **Mailam** :—Sacred to Saivaites (One of the Subramania Kshetrams).

15. **Madurantagam** :—Sacred for Vaishnavites.

16. **Chingleput** :—Station to change for Thirukkalukundram 12 miles by motor and Mahabalipuram (seven pagodas, carved temples and cars are worth visiting). Theerthams for bath and places worth visiting. Pakshi Theeram. Uphills.

17. **Conjeevaram:**—Sacred for Srivaishnavas and Saivites. Many ancient big temples. One of the five Kshetrams. Prithvi lingam is here. Also one of the Sapthapuris.

18. **Arkonam** :—Station. Junction. Worth seeing. Change here for Tirutani, Conjeevaram and Madras.

19. **Tirutani** :—Sacred for Saivaites. Important Subramania Kshetram.

20. **Thirupathi** :—Place of pilgrimage for all people. Baths in Agasa Gangai and other Theerthams. Beautiful worship.

21. **Kalashati** :—One of the 5 kshetrams. Vayu lingam is dedicated to Kalahasteeswarar of this place. Swarnamuki bath.

22. **Renigunta** :—Station. Junction.

23. **Kamalapuram** :—Pushpagiri temple. Worth visiting.

24. **Tungabadra Station** :—River Tungabadra Bath alone. Only one Dharmasala. Things hardly available.

25. **Kondapuram** :—Waterfalls. Worth seeing.

26. **Tadpathri** :—Rama's temple being visited by thousands of pilgrims from Northern India.

27. **Gooty** :—Station to change for Kishkinda through Bellary, Hospet stations. Also to go to Uduppi, Subramaniam and other places *via* Mangalore.

28. **Raichur** :—Station after Gooty direct route.

29. **Krishna Station** :—River Krishna bath. Dharmasala available near the bank. Things harldly available.

30. **Kuruduvadi Junction** :—Station to change for Pandarpur. Important place of pilgrimage. Worth visiting. Chandrabagh Nadhi bath. Worship of Pandarinath. Important for both Vaishnavas and Saivaites (Maharashtra language and Hindustani beginning).

31. **Dhond** :—Junction. Bhima Bath.

32. **Poona** :—Junction. Boarding and lodging establishment known as the Sardar Hindu lodge are available near the station Parbati a celebrated Hindu temple on the hill of that name is worth a visit.

33. **Bombay** :—Place worth seeing. A business centre.

34. **Naisk Road**.—Station for Panchavati. Godavari bath. Rama's worship. The place is called Dandakaranyam. This is the place where Soorpanaka was disfigured by Lakshmana. The joining of Kapilanadhi and Godavari. Thapovanam to be visited. Also pathways to go for Thrayambagam and origin of the Godavari.

From Nasik Road go straight to Khandwa junction and change here for Ujini otherwise called Avanthika. One of the Saptapuris. From Khandwa junction change at Itarsi for Hosangabad for Narmada Bath.

35. **Bombay (in return)**

36. **Surat** :—

37. **Baroda** :—Place worth seeing.

38. **Ahmedabad** :—

39. **Mehsana** :—The place from where journey to Dwaraka begins. Dwaraka is the place where Krishna reigned. Krishna's temple prominent. One of the Saptapuris.

40. **Palanpore** :—

41. **Abu** :—

42. **Ajmier** :—The place from where path leads to Pushkaram. Brahma's temple famous.

43. **Jaipur** :—Place is worth seeing.

44. **Agra** :—Tajmahal, One of the 7 wonders of the world. Worth seeing. Halting station to go for Mathura the place where Krishna was born. Gokulam, Brindvanam, Govardhana giri—all on thebanks of the holy river the Jumna. Temples for Krishna prominent everywhere.

45. **Delhi** :—Worth seeing station. Halting station to go for Attak for Indus bath.

46. **Ambala** :—Halting station to go for Sthaneshwar station otherwise called Kurukshetram, 26 miles from Ambala. Very famous and ancient.

47. **Simla** :—Hill station.

48. **Soranpur** :—

49. **Hardwar** :—Ganges bath. Pathway to Rishikesh, Lakshman Jwala, Gangothri, Devapıayag, Kathari, Badrinath and Brahma Kapalam. Lakshman Jwala is the place where hermits live in small huts on the holy river Ganges. Badri or Badrinath 166 miles from Lakshman Jwala is the place where God Vishnu resides. Here Pooja is being performed only for six

months commencing from every Chitra full moon and closing on every Asvijah full moon day. The remaining six months pooja is supposed to be conducted by Dhevas as men cannot go there and return on account of heavy fall of snow. Bramakapalam is the place where religious ceremonies are being performed by pilgrims and particularly by those who have no issues. Hardwar is the place where holy Ganges water is taken for Abishegam for God Ramanath of Rameswaram. This is also one of the Saptapuris (Mayapuri). Inasmuch as Hardwar is held by Vaishnavites as Haridwar (Vishnu's gate) and Saivites Hara-dwar (Siva's gate) it is quite evident that this Puri Hardwar is important to both Vaishnavites and Saivites. About 75 miles higher up Himalayas from Lakshman-jwala, the sacred stream of Ganges flows from an elevation of 7,000 feet and the place at which the stream rushes forth is called Bhagirathi. Alagananda, the Vyasaganga, Karnaganga, and Vishnuganga join the sacred Bhagirathi and go rapidly to Haridwar. The foot print of Vishnu (Vishnu Patham) is the important worship at Haridwar. Bath at Bramakund in front of the foot print of Vishnu is convenient as the current is not so rapid as in other places at Hardwar.

50. **Ayodhya** :—One of the Sapthapuris. River Sarayu bath. Rama's temple famous. Hanuman's temple prominent. Monkeys worth seeing. Path leads to Nandhigramam 12 miles from Ayodhya. This place where Puthrakameshti Yagha by the famous Ikshvaku king Dasaratha was performed.

51. **Sandili Station** :—Halting station to go for Naimisaranyam, the place where the Hermit Soothamahamuni taught to his disciples.

52. **Lucknow** :—

53. **Cawnpore** :—A business centre noted for shawls and woollen clothes.

54. **Allahabad** :—Tharaganj, 3 miles from Allahabad the place where the Ganges, the Jumna and the Saraswathi meet otherwise called Thiruveni Sangamam. Place worth seeing. Religious ceremonies compulsory. Shaving (otherwise called

Mundanam is compulsory). Even women remove a small portion of their Jatai and offer this to Brahmins as Veni Dhanam. Most sacred place for all people. Pure Ganges for Abishekam is also taken from this place just like the Hardwar.

Change here for Manickpur to go for Chitragoot station, Garvi station. Pathways lead to Chitragoota Parvatham, Valmiki Ashramam from the above station and Baradhvaja Ashramam from Shankargur station.

55. **Mirzapur** :—Durga temple. Very famous and worth seeing.

56. **Benares Cantonment** (*Through Allahabad*) :—Siva temple. Very famous. The most sacred and Jeevanmukthi place on the banks of the Ganges. Religious ceremonies important. Ganges bath and worship in all surrounding temples.

Viyasakasi worth seeing. One must not fail to go to this important place of pilgrimage in Northern India. Accommodation convenient. Noted for silk, Rudraksham, and Puja vessels.

57. **Poonpoon** :—River Poonpoon bath. Taking bath in this river releases the difficulty of being born in the world again.

58. **Patna** :—

59. **Gaya** :—River Palguni bath. Important for all to perform their Pithir ceremonies. Having born in this world one should not fail to perform his Pithir ceremonies in this place. Sacred for both Vaishnavas and Saivites. Vishnu's foot path (Vishnu Patham).

60. **Calcutta** :—" Kalighat " Kali's temple very famous. River Hugli. Ganga Sagar is worth visiting.

61. **Kharagpur** :—Mahanadhi Bath. Big junction.

62. **Kurda Road** :—Change here for Puri, Jaganath. Besides the great temple of Jaganath. Sea Bath is also enjoined as sacred.

63. **Simhachalam** :—Very celebrated Vaishnava Kshetram of the same name. Narasimha temple very famous four miles. Ready conveyances available.

64. **Waltair** :—Junction for Sitakulam from where the great Vaishnava Shrine of Sri Sailam can be reached.

65. **Godavari station** :—Godavari bath. Path to Badrachalam through ships. Badrachalam Rama's temple very famous.

66. **Bezwada** :—Krishna River Bath.

67. **Nellore** :—Pennar River Bath.

68. **Tiruvottiyur** :—A famous Siva temple dedicated to Sri Thyagarajah Swami of very considerable pilgrimage.

69. **MADRAS** :—Parthasarathy temple of Triplicane, Kapaleshwarar Temple of MYLAPORE, worth worshipping. Sight seeing.

APPENDIX H.

The list of names of some of the important Pandas Kshetra Purohits.

1. Gangaram Pitambar-Dashputra Panda.
2. Pakshi Satyanarayana Parbath Ranade Panda.
3. Vidhyanatha Bhima Shankar Panda.
4. Biswanath Ramanath Joshi Panda
5. Yegna Rama Deekshit Panda
6. Kuppusamy Ramanatha Bhatt.
7. Perumal Vadhyar-Eesanya Gurukkal.
8. Pakshi Lakshmana Sastrigal.
9. Mahadeva Iyer-Rajah Bahadur Iyer.
10. Rama Dhanushkodi-Anantha Subrahmania Sastrigal.
11. Venkatachala Deekshidhar.
12. Kodur-Subrahmania Sastrigal.
13. Maddhur-Chandra Mowleswara Sastrigal.
14. Krishna Sastrigal (Hundial).
15. Kaliyana Sundara Sastrigal.
16. Egbote Ramachandra Iyer.

17. Saligram Raghunatha Balakrishna Dashputra Panda.
18. Nepal Lal Moheria Panda Bhima Shankar Bhat Pujari.
19. Baskara Muthusamy Iyer.
20. Pattukottai Sivaramalinga Ganapathi Iyer.
21. S. Harichandra Iyer.
22. K. N. Ganesa Sastrigal.
23. N. N. Subramania Sastrigal.
24. Narayana Shamarao Kunte.
25. Jagannath Ramiah Panda.

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